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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the curriculum materials of the California Literature Program, a distinctive literature curriculum for grades K-6, in terms of how it addresses the critical/aesthetic approach. The paper notes that although a sequence of concepts, skills, and attitudes about literature in parts of the program can be identified, the organizing idea is one of literature as a tool or vehicle for developing concepts, skills, and attitudes about communication. The paper looks at the titles selected, the program's discussion of the characteristics of and range of possible responses and approaches to literature, and the type of pedagogical knowledge needed to implement the program. The paper evaluates the directions given regarding the selection of titles and types of enabling activities to be used, the questions teachers might ask students about their responses to the selections, and the focus teachers might encourage students to take during their written or oral discussions. Finally, the paper examines the specific techniques recommended for assessing students' progress in realizing the program goals and the development of their critical/aesthetic responses. (Nineteen references and an appendix of framing questions are attached.) (RS)

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# CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF A DISTINCTIVE LITERATURE CURRICULUM

Patricia J. Cianciolo
and Barbara Quirk

Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects

Institute for Research on Teaching
College of Education
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## Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects

The **Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects** was awarded to Michigan State University in 1987 after a nationwide competition. Funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, the Elementary Subjects Center is a major project housed in the Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT). The program focuses on conceptual understanding, higher order thinking, and problem solving in elementary school teaching of mathematics, science, social studies, literature, and the arts. Center researchers are identifying exemplary curriculum, instruction, and evaluation practices in the teaching of these school subjects; studying these practices to build new hypotheses about how the effectiveness of elementary schools can be improved; testing these hypotheses through school-based research; and making specific recommendations for the improvement of school policies, instructional materials, assessment procedures, and teaching practices. Research questions include, What content should be taught when teaching these subjects for understanding and use of knowledge? How do teachers concentrate their teaching to use their limited resources best? and In what ways is good teaching subject matter-specific?

The work is designed to unfold in three phases, beginning with literature review and interview studies designed to elicit and synthesize the points of view of various stakeholders (representatives of the underlying academic disciplines, intellectual leaders and organizations concerned with curriculum and instruction in school subjects, classroom teachers, state- and district-level policymakers) concerning ideal curriculum, instruction, and evaluation practices in these five content areas at the elementary level. Phase II involves interview and observation methods designed to describe current practice, and in particular, best practice as observed in the classrooms of teachers believed to be outstanding. Phase II also involves analysis of curricula (both widely used curriculum series and distinctive curricula developed with special emphasis on conceptual understanding and higher order applications), as another approach to gathering information about current practices. In Phase III, models of ideal practice will be developed, based on what has been learned and synthesized from the first two phases, and will be tested through classroom intervention studies.

The findings of Center research are published by the IRT in the Elementary Subjects Center Series. Information about the Center is included in the IRT Communication Quarterly (a newsletter for practitioners) and in lists and catalogs of IRT publications. For more information, to receive a list or catalog, or to be placed on the IRT mailing list to receive the newsletter, please write to the Editor, Institute for Research on Teaching, 252 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1034.


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Abstract

In this paper the authors analyze the curriculum materials of the California Literature Program, a distinctive literature curriculum for Grades K-6, in terms of how it addresses the critical/aesthetic approach. Although a sequence of concepts, skills, and attitudes about literature in parts of this program can be identified, the organizing idea is one of literature as a tool or vehicle for developing concepts, skills, and attitudes about communication. The authors look at the titles selected, the program's discussion of the characteristics of and range of possible responses and approaches to literature, and the type of pedagogical knowledge needed to implement the program. They evaluate the directions given regarding the selection of titles and types of enabling activities to be used, the questions one might ask students about their responses to the selections, and the focus one might encourage the students to take during their written or oral discussions. Finally, the authors examine the specific techniques recommended for assessing students' progress in realizing the program goals and the development of their critical/aesthetic responses.

# CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF DISTINCTIVE LITERATURE CURRICULUM

Patricia J. Cianciolo and Barbara Quirk[1]

## Objectives of the Study

The research reported in this paper was undertaken within the Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects. The Center's research focus is on the teaching and learning of mathematics, science, social studies, literature, music, and the visual arts in elementary school (grades K-6), with emphasis on teaching and learning for understanding and knowledge use in each the content area. This paper reports findings from an analysis and critique of the content of distinctive curriculum materials and assessment devices for the study of literature in the elementary grades K-6. The purpose of the study was to provide descriptive information and suggestions for improved design and use regarding the range and nature of curricula available to classroom teachers interested in teaching literature for understanding and use of knowledge. Although we were interested in providing descriptive information about the teaching and learning of all approaches to literature, we were particularly interested in information pertaining to how the critical/ aesthetic approach to literature was addressed in these curriculum materials.

## Methodology

### Selection of Materials

We analyzed and critiqued both commonly used and distinctive curriculum materials in the study of literature in the elementary grades. These materials were studied for their organization and sequencing of content, their methodology for teaching literature, and if and how the accompanying suggested

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[1]Patricia J. Cianciolo, professor of teacher education at Michigan State University, is a senior researcher with the Elementary Subjects Center. Barbara Quirk, a doctoral candidate in teacher education, is a research assistant with the Center.

activities, assignments, and discourse were designed to bring about conceptual-level understanding of the critical/aesthetic study of literature. It was hoped that contrasts and similarities among types of curriculum materials would help us (a) define strengths and limitations in ways of organizing the literature curriculum and (b) select various activities and assignments used to help students understand and learn to respond critically and aesthetically to literature.

## Analysis of Curricular Materials

### Development of Analysis Instrument

The research team developed a common set of framing questions organized around eight categories that provided a structure for researchers to follow in their critiques (see Appendix). This set of framing questions was also used to facilitate comparison and contrast of the common dimensions across the subject areas. The first category, "Goals," includes questions about the series as a whole and pertains to descriptive information and evaluative judgments about the nature of the goals, their clarity, and the interrelationship among different kinds of goals. Three categories about subject matter content were included in the instrument, namely "Selection," "Organization and Sequencing," and "Explication." Key questions relating to these aspects of subject matter content were applied to the series as a whole as well as to more detailed analysis of smaller pieces of the series (in the primary grades, K-3, and in the middle grades, 4-6).

To determine how the curriculum materials facilitated interactive aspects of learning (the fifth thorough the seventh categories), questions were included which focused on the nature of the "Teacher-Student Relationships and Classroom Discourse," "Classroom Activities and Assignments," and "Assessment and Evaluation Procedures." To determine the amount and nature of support

that the materials provide the teacher for becoming familiar with and implementing the curriculum, questions were included for an eighth category, "Directions to the Teacher." The questions in the latter four categories were applied to the distinctive literature curriculum materials for the primary grades (K-3) and for the middle grades (4-6).

Since the analysis was primarily qualitative, we used the framing questions to guide their inquiry as they worked between the study of the materials on a general level across all the grades and the study of particular units of instruction within the grade. This included, for example, considering questions about specifics such as activities and assignments, in light of questions about the series' stated goals or questions about the content selection and organization in the series. Researchers also worked back and forth both across and within particular categories of questions to consider the interaction between the subject matter content (questions about content selection, organization and sequencing, and explication) and the suggested activities, assignments, and discussions (questions about teacher-student relationships and classroom discourse, activities and assignments, and assessment and evaluation). To develop defensible answers to the framing questions, general impressions were recorded, particular examples were noted, inconsistent cases that might dispute generalizations were sought, and generalizations were modified as evidence was studied more closely and evaluated.

Selecting a Distinctive Literature Program

There seems to be a small number of literature programs with a planned scope and sequence for the study of literature in kindergarten or Grades 1-6. All of the commonly used children's literature programs are made up of anthologized textbooks consisting of portions of or complete literary selections. To our knowledge, there is no commercially published commonly

used or distinctive literature program that is based on the use of separate editions of children's literature trade books (paperback editions and/or hardcover editions) for each student in each grade level. It seems that the California Literature Program, prepared under the direction of the Language Arts and Foreign Languages Unit of the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Division of the California State Department of Education and subsequently published by that state's Department of Education, is the only literature program based on separate editions of children's literature trade books for the elementary grades. Whether the literature programs consist of individual literary selections (trade books) or anthologized textbooks, or whether the selections are studied in the original version or adapted to suit a particular rationale for sequencing such elements as readability levels, literary concepts, themes, or genres, all of these literature programs tend to implement in some way and to some extent aspects of a whole-language approach in the study of literature.

The California Literature Program is not detailed in one publication. In fact, planners of a literature program for any one school district, school building, or classroom have to refer to four separate documents, each of which was prepared by various committees under the direction of the Language Arts and Foreign Languages Unit.

The program, in general, is described in the Handbook for Planning an Effective Literature Program, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve (California State Department of Education, 1987d, hereafter called Handbook). The central purpose of this document and of the literature program is to promote literature-based English-language arts curriculum. More specifically, this document is designed to provide useful information for all those responsible for planning and improving the school-level English-language arts course of

studies and serves as a resource for their own creative thinking. Towards those ends the distinguishing characteristics of the literature program are described and the strategies for organizing the material by means of core, extended, and recreational reading programs included. Also included are the criteria for selecting individual literary works and the key developmental issues at the various grade levels.

Strategies for presenting literature to limited English-proficient students are identified, the need for inservice education for teachers and for the involvement of parents is addressed, and a checklist that summarizes the main ideas of the Handbook is provided in order to help the planners identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing literature programs and to select strategies for change. The readers of this handbook are advised to refer to three other documents by the California State Department of Education for additional details on how to implement this literature program, namely English-Language Arts Model Curriculum Guide, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight (1987c, hereafter called Guide); English-Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve (1987b, hereafter called Framework); and Recommended Readings in Literature, Kindergarten Through Grade Eight (1987e, hereafter called Readings).

In the Guide, literature-curriculum planners are offered models of literature-oriented language arts curriculum content which individual schools are expected to modify and expand upon, as appropriate for their particular student populations. This guide suggests a learning sequence, delineates concepts and skills, and provides representative enabling activities for learners from kindergarten through Grade 8. The sequences, which are divided into three grade spans (K-3, 3-6, and 6-8) are suggestive rather than mandatory.

(Mention should be made that in this guide the grade-level spans overlap, whereas in the other documents the grade-level spans are congruent.)

Teachers are encouraged to determine each student's readiness for new and advanced concepts and skills. This document identifies 11 recommendations pertaining to instructional concerns about problems of illiteracy, semiliteracy, and aliteracy. It offers 22 guidelines, categorized in five major groupings, namely emphasizing literary works, basing instruction on students' experiences, developing an interrelated program, developing a integrated program across the curriculum, and evaluating the English-language arts program. Each guideline is focused on one aspect of the language arts program and is followed by three representative enabling activities prepared with three grade-level spans from kindergarten through Grade 8. Throughout the guide the emphasis is on thoroughly understanding the content of the curriculum rather than on mastering basic skills. It is intended that this guide help the literature curriculum planners "shape an integrated, active core curriculum that prepares students for challenges of secondary school and beyond" (Guide, p. vii).

The Framework provides the philosophical direction and perspectives for a literature-based English-language arts curriculum and instructional program for all students. It is intended that this document be used by curriculum planners, decision makers, and teachers and parents involved in developing a systematic meaning-centered literature program in their school. The framework is to serve as the basis for the education of teachers and administrators, the development of textbooks and instructional materials, and the evaluation of programs.

It also has

> implications for (1) the Legislature, which must provide funding for libraries, instructional materials, and staff development;

> (2) school districts as they revise their curricula, plan strategies for using categorical funds most effectively, and draw on their talents to serve the needs of the students; and (3) parents who, by being informed and by reading and writing themselves, can serve as models for their children. (Framework, p. viii)

In light of the goals, principles, and practices that are described in the framework, some general features that differentiate effective programs from those that are less effective are identified.

Readings lists 1,010 titles of literary selections for students in kindergarten through Grade 8. Local-level policymakers, curriculum planners, teachers, and librarians are encouraged to use these recommended readings when developing their language arts curriculum and when selecting literature to implement that curriculum. The list is divided into three sections, namely, "Core and Extended Materials," "Recreational and Motivational Materials," and "Materials for Students in Grades Seven and Eight." Local educators are encouraged to use this classification as they develop their programs and compile their own lists and involve parents in the selection process of literature for the core list and for the independent reading list. The three types of literature are described below:

> **Core literature** includes those selections that are to be taught in the classroom, are given close reading and intensive consideration, and are likely to be an important stimulus for writing and discussion. The core list should contain works of compelling intellectual, social, or moral content. The core literature must be examples of excellent language use. District materials selection committees develop the basic list of core titles that teachers use in their classes. [All students in a classroom, whether or not English is their dominant language, should experience the core works.]
>
> **Extended literature** includes works that a teacher may assign to individual students or small groups of students to read for homework or individual reading to supplement class work. Because literature in the extended list also has emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic substance, districts may substitute an extended work for any core work in the same category.
>
> **Recreational-motivational literature** includes works of special appeal to individual readers as well as works of universal appeal

> to all students. Teachers and librarians should suggest recreational-motivational works to guide students when they are selecting individual, leisure-time reading materials from classroom, school, and community libraries. (p. ix)

The titles within these sections are listed by traditional categories that are generally known by elementary teachers (e.g. fiction--including folklore and myth, modern fantasy, modern realistic fiction, and historical fiction; nonfiction, poetry, and drama). They reflect a variety of tastes, abilities, and learning styles and are arranged alphabetically by author or by title if the author is not known. A matrix with special information about each title is provided in designated columns.

For example, in Column 1 the core material is designated by using *C*, extended material is designated by using *E*, and recreational-motivational material is designated by using *R*. In Column 2 the suggested grade span is identified, and in Column 3 special information to assist the teachers, librarians, and program planners is provided. For example, the language in which the book is written is indicated in Column 3 with the following symbols: *C* for Chinese, *J* for Japanese, *K* for Korean, *S* for Spanish, and *V* for Vietnamese. The literary contributions of specific ethnic or cultural groups are also identified in Column 3 by one of the following symbols: *B* for Black, *C* for Chinese, *F* for Filipino, *H* for Hispanic, *I* for American Indian, *J* for Japanese, *K* for Korean, and *V* for Vietnamese.

## Goals

In this program, literature is viewed as a field that "is not as process-oriented as other facets of the English-language arts curriculum, such as writing and reading" (Handbook, p. vi), and literature-curriculum planners are reminded that "teaching literature well requires a formidable degree of learning, imagination and energy" (p. v). As was noted above, the writers of

the California Literature Program state clearly that the central purpose of literature is to promote literature-based English-language arts curriculum and that it should provide "a high standard of thought and feeling at the heart of English-language arts education" (p. v). Yet they insist that literature should be considered as a subject central to the curriculum in general and to the English-language arts program in particular. In other words, literature is viewed first and foremost as a means or as a tool for realizing the goals of another broader and more process-oriented field rather than as a field whose content and nature lends itself to goals worthy of focusing on in and of themselves. This position is tempered somewhat by statements such as the following, which suggest that literature should be valued for itself: "Literature should be considered an essential subject for study by all students" (Handbook, p. vi), and "Literature is one of the basics and should be taught in all curricular areas" (Readings, p. x).

By systematic exposure to what is designated as "our civilization's finest achievements in literature" (Handbook, p. 10), the California Literature Program is intended to ensure the accomplishment of several goals at the same time. These goals, as stated and elaborated upon in the Handbook (pp. 7-12), are identified below:

1. To increase the students' appreciation of the aesthetic values of literature by whetting and sharpening their intellectual skills.

2. To foster an awareness of society, which involves making the emotional connections, develops a sense of belonging, a loyalty to our past, and a willingness to participate in our future.

3. To challenge each student to develop a personal sense of ethical responsibility; that is, to ensure that the students are induced to identify with the experience of another by creating that sense of empathy and shared human values that underpin all ethical action.

4. To provide the students with a solid body of knowledge derived from a common cultural heritage.

5. To help students become aware of their own cultural heritage and the heritage of others.

6. To provide students with the necessary language and thinking skills acquired through frequent and meaningful listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

7. To use literature as a profoundly humanizing component of the curriculum.

Whereas the central purpose or objective of the California Literature Program is to promote literature-based English-language arts curriculum, the primary purpose of other literature programs is purportedly more literature focused. Whether or not their programs accomplish these goals is another issue. For example, the main objective of a commonly used literature curriculum, namely the textbook literature series the Odyssey: An HBJ Literature Program, Grades One Through Six (Sebesta & Simon, 1986) is said "to provide a solid foundation of literary experiences on which students may build a lifetime of reading pleasure" (East of the Sun [a book in the Odyssey program], p. T12). Yet the critical analysis of the Odyssey literature program done by Cianciolo and VanCamp (1991) revealed that not only did Sebesta and Simon fail to design a literature program which would lead to the realization of that objective, but their program, like the California Literature Program, seemed to promote literature-based English-language arts curriculum and reading comprehension rather than literature as a field in and of itself worthy of focused study.

The California Literature Program is one of several components of the language arts curriculum rather than a program in and of itself. This is quite typical of most contemporary whole-language language arts or reading programs. To achieve the goals of the California English-language arts program in general and the literature program in particular, curriculum planners are advised to make extensive use of individual unabridged literary

selections in their original versions and to use whole-language concepts. They are also encouraged to supplement the whole-language practices with a basal reader if they feel the need to do so.

The authors of the documents that describe aspects of the California Literature Program as a significant component of the English-language arts curriculum focus on the centrality of language and on holistic views of teaching and learning reading/language arts because they believe those views incorporate all communication skills and permit the pupils to experience language as a means of social communication, as the medium of personal thought, and as the means of personal and social learning in sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic events. Their intention is to make certain that the students have experienced in this literacy event three kinds of learning: learning language, learning about language, and learning through language. The result is that students schooled in the California literature-based program, as in so many of the other current literature-based whole-language programs, may well become literate but not necessarily literary!

Examination of the primary objective, the goals and related guidelines specified for the literature curriculum, the representative enabling activities, and evaluation procedures recommended to the literature-curriculum planners reveals that the instructional efforts of the California Literature Program are not focused on learning about and appreciating literature. The instructional efforts focus mainly on using literature as a model for writing or oral composition skills or for using the content (facts) included in literary selections to teach other subject matter (mathematics, science, health, social studies (especially history and geography), and fine arts (especially dramatization and music). The authors of this program seem to assume that knowledge about literature as an art form and the development of aesthetic

sensitivities to literature will be realized merely by reading a generous amount of good literature.

All of this is not to negate the fact that even though specific objectives and goals which pertain to the teaching of literary understandings are not included, throughout this program some attention (albeit minimal) is given to the sequential development of some literary appreciation skills. In the Readings, Framework, and Guide, the planners of the literature programs are advised to provide for some kind of sequential learning within grade-level spans on a school district-wide level or at individual-school level. For example, the authors of the documents recommend that in Grade 2, the children are asked only to recognize poetry as one form of several forms of literature, whereas in Grade 5 they are expected to identify the elements of poetry. In Grade 2 the students are asked to recognize a folktale or a fable as a kind of fiction, whereas by Grade 5 they are expected to be able to appreciate the literature of different cultures and to identify the cultural background of a literary work such as a legend, folktale, or a poem in translation.

Consistent with the intent of Goal #1, the authors of the handbook emphasize that literature is a subject that is entertaining and captures children's imagination and enchants. Furthermore, they claim and "once students have entered the imaginative world conjured up by literature, a series of intellectual benefits accrue" (Handbook, p. 7). Thus, they conclude, literature serves as "an ideal matrix for teaching children how to think" (p. 8). In relation to language arts learning, they assert,

> Because of its emotional value, literature motivates reading, which leads to improved reading skills. Vocabulary expands.... Listening and speaking develop in the class discussions. Writing improves. In each case, literature serves as a natural focus for helping students achieve greater language mastery. Furthermore, because literature can motivate reading, it can serve as a vehicle to encourage learning in other subject areas such as science, social studies, fine arts, and even physical education.

> As students read good books, they unconsciously assimilate the subtle variations of syntax, rhythm, and usage which stimulate and help refine their writing style. (p. 7)

It follows, they say, that schools should keep models of excellent writing in front of their students, writing which exemplifies accomplished prose style and provides insight into the human condition. They encourage English educators to read thought-provoking works, debate the salient issues raised by them in class discussions, weigh the various interpretations, and come to their own conclusions in frequently written reports and papers.

To accomplish the literature-program goals, the English-language arts teachers are urged to emphasize the reading and study of all types and genres of significant literary works. They are encouraged to use literature as a base or foundation for integrating instruction in the language arts, especially as a means for helping students improve their skills in thinking, listening, reading, and writing. In fact, specific examples of how literature may be incorporated in the discussions and representative enabling activities for each of the three grade-level spans (K-3, 3-6, and 6-8) for each of the 22 guidelines are listed in the Guide. It is also emphasized in each of the documents analyzed for this study that the school and public libraries should be considered as extensions of the classroom and as rich sources of materials and expertise for the support of the goals of the English-language arts program in general and of the literature program in particular.

The espoused Goal #1 cannot be realized by merely reading and/or using quality literature as recommended by the authors of this program, nor can it be realized merely by whetting and sharpening students' intellectual skills. The authors of this program do not recognize that literature is an art form nor do they seem to be aware of the kinds of sensitivities and understandings

which one must develop in order to respond critically and aesthetically to literature.

Certain essential conditions must be acknowledged if an aesthetic response is to occur, but the authors of the California literature-curriculum documents do not acknowledge them: One, the literary selection in and of itself is an aesthetic object. It is an independent and concrete object of art with intrinsic characteristics, form, and structure. Two, aesthetic values do exist. These are the characteristics or standards determined by a society (a particular culture) over time and should be used to determine the worth or quality of the (literary) art piece. And, three, creativity is expressed by both the artist (author or book illustrator) and the appreciator (reader) of the story.

The authors of the California Literature Program violate the concept of literature as an art form further by focusing on the reality depicted in literature; they fail to acknowledge that whatever image of reality or aspect of the human experience that is depicted in a novel, picture book, poem, or drama, is the illusion of that reality. Their statement of goals and the very nature of the activities they recommend reveal that they consider the images depicted in the realistic fiction selections as mere mirroring of aspects of life. In other words, they fail to recognize that artistic excellence, in literary art or any other kind of art, is never identical with photographic accuracy, nor is it a mirror reflection of aspects of the realities of the human condition. In a work of literary art, the writer or the book illustrator uses words or lines and shapes and color to create images that amount to a selective interpretation of the reality. The result of this selective interpretation is an illusion rather than a miniature of the reality that is depicted in or associated with the story. Admittedly, inherent in any

artistic illusion must be some amount of reality; in fact, if some degree of reality were missing, we would have complete abstraction and thus no meaning, no story, poem, or drama. The illusionary image must be thoroughly identifiable and believable, yet it must not be exactly like life.

Literary works of art are aesthetic objects. When teaching students to engage in critical thinking about literature, we are teaching them to respond aesthetically to literature. So, when we are teaching them to respond to literature in this manner, it is crucial to recognize the value and inevitability of both cognitive and affective response to literature. Both are inherent in critical or aesthetic response and should be encouraged in any literature program, especially if we want to develop discriminating readers of literature and readers who will turn to quality literature for lasting and memorable reading experiences. Goal #1 encourages attention to affective response to literature; unfortunately, the examples provided in the literature-curriculum documents as prototypical activities focus on the cognitive responses and blatantly ignore the affective aspect of aesthetic response. In light of the fact that the authors of the California Literature Program have not provided for these essential conditions for the development of aesthetic response, it seems hardly likely that their espoused goal to increase the students' appreciation of the aesthetic values of literature by whetting and sharpening their intellectual skills would be accomplished.

That the curriculum planners should seek to develop the students' sense of commitment and loyalty to the highest ideals of citizenship in a democracy or to instill a sense of belonging and rootedness in our history as a nation is emphasized in the discussion of Goal #2. The authors claim that by reading literature the students would learn how "to distinguish a free society from an authoritarian one and the perils that accompany [the abuse of high ideals] ...



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and will exercise good judgments and form their own opinions as the ultimate expression of that freedom" (p. 8).

An important aspect of this goal is the intention to use literature to refine the students' feelings, their personalities, and their relationship with others, for these qualities are seen as necessary to develop a sense of citizenship. This goal focuses on the use of literature to invite the students "to think about the institutions that distinguish a free society from an authoritarian one and the perils that accompany their abuse" (Handbook, p. 8). This goal pertains to such concepts as an appreciation for the central concepts of the rule of law and the nightmarish logic of totalitarianism. By dramatizing the past, literature is said to show the reader "who we are as Americans and where we came from" (p. 9). The authors also stress in their discussion of this goal that because good literature uses language precisely, it contributes to the goal of helping to develop mature personalities--creating individuals capable of experiencing good judgment and forming their own opinions as the ultimate expression of that freedom so they will not be prone to swallow propaganda or clever euphemisms masquerading as the truth.

In the discussion of Goal #3, the authors of this literature program state that reading literature ensures that the students are induced to identify with the experience of another by creating that sense of empathy and shared human values that underpin all ethical action. However, curriculum planners were reminded that literature's power regarding character formation is suggestive, not absolute: "It should not take the place of the family, church, or other community institutions" (Handbook, p. 10).

Goal #4 and Goal #5 are listed as two separate goals in the documents analyzed. However, they are treated as potential, if not actual, controversial aspects of this literature program in a section labeled

"Arguments Opposing a Literature Program" (Handbook, pp. 11-12). In discussion about the issues about using literature to enable students to acquire knowledge from their common cultural heritage, the authors refer to the treasure-house of literature (the core literature component of this program) as literature that liberates us from

> the constraints of time, place, and personal experience into which each of us as an individual is born. The real injustice would be to deny any child access to the wealth of insights that our best literature has to offer. To deny the wisdom of our literary heritage may restrict their social mobility and limit the potential that schools have to create opportunities for students to develop their individual talents and to prepare for participation in our society. (p. 11)

Support of this goal to assure knowledge derived from a common cultural heritage reflected in the core literature does not negate the responsibility of the curriculum planner to encourage the maintenance of a community's or individual's ethnic identity through the use of great literature by and about minorities. Such literature is said to confer lasting intellectual, social, and spiritual benefits on those who read it. Furthermore, all students will profit from such literature to understand those whose experiences in America differ from theirs:

> Our country was founded on the expectation that out of many traditions one nation could evolve that would be stronger and more durable than any single tradition. To argue that teaching a common core of literature in our pluralistic society is not feasible because there is no basis for consensus is to beg the question. It is, and always has been, precisely the task of the public schools to help form that consensus. (Handbook, pp. 11-12)

> The point is, far from being "elitist," the common culture belongs to all of us. And every child in the United States--rich or poor, male or female, black, Hispanic, Asian, or white--is entitled to experience it fully. (Handbook, p. 14)

In support of Goal #6, the authors of the Handbook say that

> once students have entered the imaginative world conjured up by literary works, a series of intellectual benefits begins to accrue. Because of its emotional value, literature motivates reading, which

> leads to improved reading skills.... Listening and speaking skills develop in class discussions. Writing improves. In each case, literature serves as a natural focus for helping students achieve greater language mastery.... As students read good books, they unconsciously assimilate the subtle variations of syntax, rhythm, and usage which stimulate and help refine their writing styles. It follows that schools should keep models of excellent writing in front on their students.... In English classes, students are expected to read these provocative works, debate the momentous issues raised by them in class discussions, weigh the various interpretations, and come to their own conclusions in frequent written reports and papers. In all this, literature serves as an ideal matrix for teaching students how to think. (p. 7)

The phenomenon of emotional identification of the reader with a book character and the purported effects of this aspect of response to literature is reflected in Goal #7. That this kind of response to literature and this program goal is to be valued is evident in the following statement:

> By inducing the audience to identify with the experience of another, the dynamic of literature has already predisposed the reader to start thinking sympathetically. Literature encourages the reader to feel connected to the larger human community. It helps create that sense of empathy and shared human values that underpin all ethical action.
>
> To be sure, literature should not take the place of the family, church, or other community institutions in forming character; its power is suggestive, not absolute.... Literature can show the reader what good and evil look like.... But it cannot make us moral. A systematic exposure to our civilization's finest achievements in literature will ensure that students are confronted with the essential questions in life. How students answer them is, and must remain, up to them. (Handbook, p. 10)

The California Literature Program goals do not seem to be stated in terms of strategic or metacognitive processing of knowledge and understanding, for processing the knowledge about literature for meaning, organizing it for remembering, and accessing it for application. Goal #12 seems to apply to teaching higher order thinking when responding to literature. Conceivably Goal #13 might be interpreted as applicable to metacognitive processing of knowledge about aspects of literature. Nothing in the actual statement of the numerous guidelines and accompanying enabling activities included in the Guide

specifically mentions or even implies how one might implement the metacognitive aspects of the processes of knowledge about literature in the classroom. Furthermore, even though these goals aim at logical and critical thinking, nothing is said about an awareness of or ability to consider or understand one's own thinking processes when responding critically/aesthetically to literature.

It is obvious throughout all the documents pertaining to the various facets of the California Literature Program, that literature is viewed primarily as a vehicle for whetting and sharpening intellectual skills, for improving personal and character traits and attitudes about oneself and society. Nonetheless, some attention, albeit minimal, is given to the attitude and dispositional goals included in this literature program. This stance is reflected in the enabling activity for Guideline #3.

While cooperative learning goals do not seem to be a feature of this literature program, they are considered to a limited extent. Some of the activities included in the Guide do indicate the application of cooperative learning strategies. One example of a recommended enabling activity that one might implement to facilitate the goals of cooperative learning is discussed below:

> After hearing or reading several poems by Langston Hughes, such as "My People," "Negro," "Quiet Girl," and "As I Grow Older," or works by other major poets, students, working in cooperative learning groups, select one poem and create a similar or related poem based on the same theme. The students in these peer groups engage in read-around activities to critique each other's efforts and make recommendations for ways to improve the content, the word choice, and the mechanics of what they have written. Final products are compiled in a book for the class or school library. (p. 20)

The statement of goals does not specify that the literature program planners should consider the students' learning needs, reading interests, or aspects of the study of literature which are developmentally appropriate for

children at various grade levels. Nonetheless, the authors of this literature program do actually attend to this goal in various ways in each of the documents examined for this study. A specific grade range is designated for each of the representative enabling activities identified for each guideline. Sensitivity to students' needs, interests, and developmental levels is evident also in the range and variety of genres that are recommended in each of the three kinds of reading (e.g., core, extension, and recreational/motivational literature) in the designated grade-level spans identified for each literary selection cited in these lists, in the identification of specific ethnic or cultural groups depicted in each selection, and in the enabling activities designed for students whose first language is one other than English.

Content Selection

The committee that helped to prepare the Guide claim that the content and model lessons for the literature curriculum are designed to help teachers lead discussions, frame questions, and design activities that contain multiple levels of learning. The guide also includes examples intended to indicate how knowledge at one level can be reinforced and expanded as students advance through the curriculum. The organization of material is meant to help teachers move each student quickly from skill acquisition to higher order learning while, at all times, fully engage in rigorous academic study.

Although one can identify a sequence of concepts, skills, and attitudes about literature in parts of this program, it appears that, in the main, this sequence is neither consistently logical nor psychological in its structure, nor does it seem to focus on, stem from, or lead to any organizing ideas about literature as a subject. Instead, the organizing idea around which most of the program goals, guidelines, content, and model lessons in this literature program seems to see literature primarily as a tool or vehicle for developing

concepts, skills, attitudes about communication by integrating it in the instruction of listening, speaking reading, and writing. The literature curriculum for this program is based largely on the sequence in which one uses the materials (the core works) rather than on the sequence of concepts, skills, and attitudes one would want the students to learn. Furthermore, the literary concerns the students are expected to learn are largely isolated and simplistic; there does not seem to be a design or organizing idea that develops an awareness and appreciation of aspects of literature that would lead the students to understand literature as an art and to learn to view its aesthetic elements more critically.

In other words, the content is not organized around the basic understandings and principles (key ideas) rooted in literature as a discipline. The relationships between these key ideas about literature are not emphasized, either by contrasting them along common dimensions or integrating them across dimensions so as to produce knowledge structures that are differentiated yet cohesive.

There does not seem to be a sequence of literary concerns or some specific organizing ideas about literature per se around which this literature program is developed. Instead, the literature curriculum seems to consist primarily of each educator's or faculty groups' choice of titles selected from the core list. The titles included in this list are supposed to be experienced through close reading and through other approaches, such as hearing them read aloud in part or whole or seeing them performed on the stage or in film. They then are to be used as motivators of classroom discussion and students' writing.

To a certain extent, some aspects of the California Literature Program suggest that it constitutes a curriculum that is based on a canon of sorts.

The aspects that point to the notion of a canon include the following: (a) The content of this literature program seems to be determined primarily by the themes and topics incorporated in core books; (b) the titles selected for the core list, which includes all genres, are intended to enable the students to experience a representative sampling of America's literary heritage in the context of systematic guided-literature experiences that are to be articulated at all grades. The reading of the core books and the use of them in whole-group activities or with individual students is restricted to specific grade spans to some extent in this literature curriculum.

Currently, the idea of the canon, the perspective that a body of commonly read literary texts should be read by all students during the course of their academic careers, is one that is hotly debated among many educators at all academic levels from the elementary grades through the graduate school level. The debate about canon formation centers around what materials constitute the literary heritage of students in the United States, or any other cosmopolitan country for that matter. The work of feminist and ethnic authors, the historicist emphasis on the social context of minority people, and the renewed interest in the mimetic dimensions of literature have brought forward an immense body of works for serious consideration by literature-curriculum planners. The following statements reflect the perspective inherent in a canonical approach to the study of literature:

> Our country was founded on the expectation that out of many traditions one nation could evolve that would be stronger and more durable than any single tradition. To argue that teaching a common core of literature in our pluralistic society is not feasible because there is no basis for consensus is to beg the question. It is, and always has been, precisely the task of the public schools to help form that consensus. (Handbook, pp. 11-12)

> The point is that all students in a classroom, including those whose dominant language is not English, should experience the core literature program. Through commonality of the core works, the students will be better prepared and motivated to participate in subsequent discussions, student writing, and other activities

> designed to help them more fully comprehend literature in general and the core works in particular. (p. 14)

The curriculum planners are advised that the members of the California State Department Education Language Arts Curriculum Committee will revise the core list periodically because critical values change over time and many new worthy literary pieces will be written. The literary selections the committee considers significant will be retained, the new distinctive titles will be added, and those that do not stand the test of time will be deleted. The creation of the core list appears to be a "top-down" process, where those in the decision-making position (the members of the Language Arts Committee) will decide what is and is not significant and worthy of focus in the literature curriculum. Purportedly, the criteria the committee will use in selecting works for the core list will include "suitability for age groups, substance leading to 'cultural literacy,' and examples of excellence in language use as opposed to trite, poorly crafted selections" (Handbook, p. 45).

There are, however, a number of other considerations that were and will continue to be taken into account in selecting titles for the core list; and with attention to these concerns, one can acknowledge that at least the program will go beyond establishing a static canon, albeit a temperate one.

> As a starting point, the core list should be well-balanced in several respects. In terms of genre, it should include works from all of the major literary modes, including poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction. In terms of chronology, it should include enough old favorites to give a sense of the wealth of the written tradition as well as enough contemporary works to provide a sense of literature as an ongoing venture. In terms of breadth, it should represent the full range of human moods and voices (comic, romantic, tragic, satiric, melodramatic, and so on). Works by both men and women from around the world should be studied. Because the diversity of American society should be reflected in the literature program, it is imperative that excellent writing by authors from racial and ethnic minority groups be sought out and included. The common quality shared by selections should be their acknowledged literary worth--their power to raise questions, stimulate the imagination, provide a fresh point of view, and expand the student's

knowledge of the world and the possibilities inherent in language. (Handbook, p. 16)

While there is not a mandatory curriculum for literature or any other subject in the state, the California State Department of Education does issue a guide for each curricular area. Each guide is intended as an evocative model of that particular subject content area, be it literature, any other aspect of the English-language arts, or any other subject content area. A learning sequence delineating concepts, skills, and representative exemplary activities for literature appropriate for learners in kindergarten through Grade 8 is included in the Guide. This sequence is suggestive. The overarching message of the curriculum materials for literature is that, although sequencing essential learnings for various grade levels is useful in organizing so large a body of information, learning is not linear. "It is a process that involves a continuous overlay of concepts and skills so that students' understandings are ever-broadened and ever-deepened" (vii). The curriculum planners are advised that

> no matter how the individual course is arranged, the effective literature program must be strategically coordinated from year to year--primary grades through high school and well balanced. Specifically, this implies that planning the core list should take place not just within but also across grade levels. It follows that the years each student spends in the literature program from kindergarten through grade twelve should be conceived as a articulated series of experiences. (Handbook, pp. 15-16)

Four purposes are emphasized in the teaching of literature and the other English-language arts at the kindergarten through Grade 8 levels. The emphasis is on understanding the content of the curriculum rather than on mastering basic skills. These purposes include the following:

1. Prepare the students for the curriculum they will encounter at the upper grade levels.
2. Function as informed and effective citizens in a democratic society.

3. Function effectively in the world of work.
4. Realize personal fulfillment. (Guide, p. 1)

Examination of these purposes reveals that, except perhaps for the purpose of enabling the student to realize personal fulfillment, the pragmatic slant of this curriculum is strikingly obvious as is the lack of emphasis on students' affective thinking competencies and aesthetic sensitivities.

Although the term "aesthetic values" is included in Goal #1, it is readily apparent that the authors of this literature program view aesthetic response to literature as primarily an intellectual process. This unbalanced combination of thought and emotion, overintellectualizing and underestimating the affective, typifies this literature program. When teaching critical/aesthetic response to literature, it is crucial to recognize the value and inevitability of both cognitive and affective response to literature. Both are intricately related in aesthetic response and should be encouraged rather than squelched in any literature program, especially one that has as its goal critical/aesthetic response to literature (Bogdan, 1986; Cianciolo, 1988).

## Content Organization and Sequencing

The literature program described in the four documents analyzed and critiqued for this study is a major component of the literature-based English-language arts program which in turn is part of the California Reading Program, which is also referred to as the California Reading Initiative. In the professional articles about the California curriculum, the terms the "California Literature Program," "California Literature Project," the "California Reading Program," and the "California Reading Initiative" are used interchangeably (see Barr, 1990). Purportedly it is a top-down and bottom-up project, devoted to putting Louise Rosenblatt's transactional critical response theory to work for all California students in grades K-12 (Farrell & Squire, 1990).

This literature program does not seem to be structured around a set of thematic strands or concepts. If there is an organizing factor around which this program is structured, it seems to be around the key ideas inherent in the program goals and/or the content, themes, messages, and major ideas of the books included in the core lists. As was established earlier in this paper, the goals are not especially literature-oriented. Since the core list is revised periodically and each school district, school, and teacher is free to focus on whatever titles they wish, as long as the titles are included in the core list, that source does not seem to be a particularly stable one around which to structure a literature program. Thus, it would appear that the California Literature Program does not provide the means by which the literature-curriculum planners could effectively establish a scope and sequence for such aspects of content as knowledge, understanding, concepts, skills, attitudes, and so on, pertaining to the teaching and learning of literature in Grades K-12. It appears that this literature program does not provide for the kind of structure, scope, and sequence of content and the kinds of literary concepts one must understand, as well as the skills or attitudes needed for effective reading of literature in general or for specific kinds of literature in particular, for understanding literature as an art or for engaging in literary criticism (evaluating it) even at an elementary level.

It is up to each school district, school building personnel, and grade-level teacher to establish a specific scope and sequence for the literature program. Thus, there seems to be little incentive or opportunity to assure any degree of articulation in the scope and sequence within the state, be it from one school district to another, from one school to another school within a district, or even from one classroom to another within any one school. In

fact, articulation at any one or all of these levels would depend largely on the competencies of the leadership of those responsible for curriculum development and curriculum improvement.

To facilitate articulation and consistency in the development of literature curriculum in the California schools, a number of staff-development efforts supported by a network of teachers, from kindergarten through Grade 12, occurred. Each summer since 1985, the program of professional development of literature teachers consisted of attendance at a four-week summer institute located on some university campuses (UCLA and other California State University campuses, guided by a California Literature Project teacher-leader). Approximately 100 teachers from throughout California participated in each institute in groups of 20 to 25. The Framework and other California State Department of Education publications served as useful resources for studying such topics as examining literature for students in kindergarten through Grade 12, responses to literature, literary criticism, and literature-curriculum planning. Each teacher purportedly left the institute with a draft of a literature-curriculum plan that they were to field test with their own students the following fall.

Follow-up support consists of six days each of the next two school years at regional meetings. During these meetings the teachers attempt to solve their problems of implementation, share results, and modify their teaching strategies in order to improve the chances for students success. They also are expected to use this time to seek ways collaboratively to inspire other teachers throughout their schools and districts with the desire to make reforms in the literature curriculum. "As workshops develop and materials multiply and travel across the network, the teachers' influence grows" (Barr, 1990, p. 42). Thus, staff development relating to the development of the

literature-curriculum plans put forth in the Framework and the other related documents focusing on aspects of the California Literature Program, as well as implementing and disseminating these plans, are accomplished largely through a pattern of networking comparable to that which was used in the late 1970s and 1980s by the Bay Area Writing Project (now known as the National Writing Project).

The writing project was very successful, for in a relatively short period of time, through the network approach, teachers throughout the United States, at all grade levels, not only knew about but were teaching what became known as process writing. Expectations among the California State Department of Education language arts/literature-curriculum leaders seem to be that their literature project will be accepted and implemented with equal speed and enthusiasm. As with the process writing movement, it appears that the California Literature Project may well spread throughout the state. But one wonders how even a reasonable degree of articulation regarding the scope and sequence of concepts about the nature and substance about literature as a discipline (namely, literature as an art and humanity) and about elements of the different kinds of literature (fiction, poetry, drama, etc.) and the literary genres (historical fiction, fantasy, folk literature, biography, etc.) will be considered, let alone attempted.

One wonders how there can be a reasonable degree of coherence across units and grade levels. It appears that the only factor that might give any semblance of articulation about these aspects of the teaching and learning of literature in kindergarten through Grade 12 might be the lists for the core literary works and extended reading and recreational/motivational reading designated for each of the four grade-level ranges. Since each of these lists contain so many titles (a committee from each district develops its own

basic lists from these three lists, and each teacher identifies the titles he/she will teach in his/her classroom), the possibility of articulation even in this context seems more than a little remote.

Content Explication in the Text

The content presentation is clear as far as it goes, but one might ask whether the information presented is enough. To use effectively the information and suggestions contained in each of the four literature curriculum documents, the curriculum planners at all levels--be it the school district, school, or individual teacher--must possess extensive content and pedagogical knowledge. Because of the organizational deficiencies of the documents--especially the lack of a specific scope and sequence (be it linear or spiral), regarding conceptual knowledge about literature, content, and enabling activities for each of these and other aspects of a literature curriculum from kindergarten through Grade 8 or 12--the curriculum planners would need to select one or some combination of the usual approaches for teaching literature and then choose selections that fit the approach or approaches chosen. If, for example, the students are to study the characteristics of a particular genre of literature such as historical fiction, it would then be necessary to select those pieces which aptly represent historical fiction as it is generally defined by literature scholars and critics alike.

The same would be true if the teacher were providing instruction on any of the other genres of literature: fantasy, science fiction, modern realistic fiction, biography/autobiography, poetry, fable, or myth. It appears that the curriculum planners are expected to have an adequate background of knowledge about literature, for very little information about the elements of literature or about the characteristics of specific genres, themes, motifs, responses to literature, or approaches to literature is provided in any of the four



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documents. One does find a brief statement about the characteristics of each genre in the Readings, which lists titles, the core, extended, and recreational materials according to genres (the traditional categories). For example, the following statement precedes the lists of historical fiction:

> Historical fiction, though it is set in a time prior to the one in which we live, is like contemporary realism in that it relates human experiences in the natural world. The historical novel is an imaginative story in which the author has deliberately reconstructed the life and times of a past period.
>
> However, a book of historical fiction should do more than relate a good story of the past, authentically and imaginatively. It should illuminate the problems of today by examining those of yesterday. The themes of historical books are basic ones: the meaning of freedom, loyalty and treachery, love and hate, acceptance of new ways, closed minds versus open ones, and the age-old struggle between good and evil. (pp. 20-21)

Obviously, this description is not comprehensive enough or explicit enough for the teacher to use as an adequate source to teach the characteristics of this genre. Other professional sources such as Norton's Through the Eyes of a Child (1991), Lukens's A Critical Handbook of Children's Literature (1976), or Huck, Hepler, and Hickman's Children's Literature in the Elementary School (1987) would have to be sought out. Not too many teachers have either the time or the inclination to do that for each topic they are about to teach.

If the teacher chooses a thematic approach, such as teaching children about stories about survival, immigration, relationship with family and/peers, or about children as victims of war, the document listing the literature selections would be even less helpful. No titles are categorized by theme or motif. Once again, one would have to refer to sources other than those about the California Literature Program. The Children's Catalog (Yaakov, 1991) would probably prove an invaluable source, for literature readings these are categorized by theme or motif as well as by age or grade-level range and by genre, author, and title. Extensive pedagogical knowledge would be necessary

for strategies related to sequencing the content, dealing with children's misconceptions, and higher order applications of content beyond the suggestions provided in the four documents about the California Literature Program.

The fact that this literature program is based on trade books is one of its strongest characteristics. In fact, it is this very aspect of the program that makes it unique. The literary selections that are listed in the Readings (1987) have wide appeal, seem to be grouped adequately according to genre, and match the reading interest of children in the designated grade-level spans. There also seems to be a balance between the classics, award books, critics' choices, and children's favorites.

School libraries have a critical role in this kind of literature program. More specifically, any school district, school, or individual teacher deciding to implement this kind of literature program would have to have a very well-established library collection in place. In order to provide children with adequate experiences with real books and to accomplish the other goals that are both implicit and explicit in this curriculum, the school library must be staffed by certified professionals who will assume the responsibility for the development and maintenance of an extensive and well-balanced collection and who will support and collaborate with the teachers to meet the instructional needs of the students. In an embarrassingly high percent of elementary schools in California, like those in far too many other states, the school library is the neglected component of the school curriculum.

> The majority of the schools in California have a room designated as the library. However, support for library media programs has not been a priority in California during recent years. Dwindling financial support for libraries has resulted in collections of books and other materials and media that are inadequate to meet students' instructional and informational needs. And over the past decade there has been a growing reliance on noncertified staff member and volunteers to maintain checkout services. (California State Department of Education, 1987a)

It is possible that the authors of this literature program viewed their list of goals as the key ideas around which they structured the learning networks of knowledge to be learned, for to some extent the facts and concepts about literature that they attempt to teach do reflect the ideas implied in these goals. But the proliferation of goals identified and their very specificity suggest that the attainment of knowledge goals does not imply learning networks of knowledge structured around key ideas per se. Instead, the selections are organized around genres of literature. The activities tend most often to take readers' attention away from the literary aspects of the selections, focusing on the use of concepts, facts, and values cited in the literature to enrich, supplement, or reinforce the skills and content learned in other subject areas or to encourage readers to apply them to their personal experiences. In this literature program, relatively little attention is give to the learning of facts, concepts, and attitudes about literature or to fostering critical/aesthetic response to literature.

It would have been advantageous if, in at least one of the documents (perhaps the Guide or the Framework), suggestions were given as to how one might structure networks of knowledge about literature around a few key ideas, such as the following:

> Literature is an art and should be considered an [illusion of] reality rather than a mirror reflection or a miniature image of reality.
>
> Literature is a humanity and thus may provide continuity with the human experience, enabling one to gain knowledge and insights about oneself, others and one's world.
>
> Literature may serve as a means to satisfy personal interests and needs. Specific elements and characteristics can be identified for literature in general and for each kind (genre) of literature....
>
> Literature should be valued and enjoyed for its own sake, that is, for the aesthetic experience it offers the reader. (Cianciolo & VanCamp, p. 8)

Organizing the content of the literature program around a limited number of basic understandings and principles rooted in literature as a subject discipline, such as the major ideas listed above, tends to empower students with meaningfully understood, integrated, and applicable learning that can be accessed and used when relevant in a broad range of situations in and out of school. In addition, organizing the content around the key ideas tends to imply that the program will more likely to do the following things:

> Balance breadth with depth by developing the limited content sufficiently to ensure conceptual understanding;
>
> Emphasize the relationships between powerful ideas, both by contrasting along common dimensions and integrating across dimensions so as to produce knowledge structures that are differentiated yet cohesive;
>
> Provide students not only with instructions, but also with opportunities to actively process information and construct meaning fostering problem solving and other higher order thinking skills in the context of knowledge application; thus, the focus is less on thinking processes per se, and more on how to make use of previously acquired knowledge in new contexts. (Cianciolo & VanCamp, p. 8)

The content of the California Literature Program does not seem to be organized in a manner that facilitates remembering or accessing it for application. The task of organizing the literature curriculum is left up entirely to whoever assumes the responsibility for developing it in the individual district, school, or classroom. Goal #12 relates to teaching children to think critically, but no enabling activities designed to accomplish this goal were recommended in any of the documents. Likewise, nothing pertaining to the strategic or metacognitive aspects of the processes were considered in any of the four documents analyzed.

A sequence more in accord with literature as a discipline in and of itself would reveal some identifiable focus on the nature of literature. This focus would help to empower the students to appreciate, understand, integrate,

and apply more aptly what they have learned about literature in a broad range of situations involving literature in and out of school. Nonetheless, if the framework and the guidelines highlighted in the documents of the California Literature Program are implemented, the students who participate in the literature program are bound to acquire some valuable conceptual understandings and dispositions about literature (though somewhat fragmentary and unrelated), for despite this apparent lack of an appropriate sequence, there are some specific conceptual understandings and dispositions about literature that the students are likely to acquire. These understandings and dispositions include the ability to recognize forms of literature (poetry, drama, fiction, biography); to identify the elements of fiction (characterization, setting, theme, plot, setting, and mood); to recognize the elements of poetry (rhythm, rhyme, figurative language, etc.); and so on.

Teacher-Student Relationship and Classroom Discourse

At this point in our examination of the four documents detailing the various aspects of the California Literature Program, the materials suggested for use by the teacher and the children will be considered. The accessibility of available materials is hard to determine or predict. In school districts and at the individual school levels, where the professional library and the central school library or media center for the students are considered important resources for optimum development of and continuous learning by the faculty and the students, one will find that at least some of the best of the new publications each year will be made accessible. Two of the documents examined for this study contain extensive bibliographies of recommended professional readings (books and monographs).

The Framework has an extensive bibliography listing approximately 75 publications about literature as a discipline, the teaching and learning of

literature, curriculum development and curriculum improvement, teaching reading and language arts, language development, teaching English as a second language, integrated instruction, and so on. Excellent extensive bibliographies of selected professional references regarding the teaching of literature are included in the section of the Handbook entitled "Checklist for Assessing a School Literature Program" (pp. 54-62). These references are pertinent to the purposes and the content of the Handbook. These bibliographies are divided into five groups: "Book Lists" (26 titles), "Book on Teaching Literature" (26 titles), "Literary Criticism and Theory" (11 titles), "Literary Research" (4 titles), and "Literature Cited in the Text" (meaning literature cited in this document; 125 titles). All of the professional references cited are quite well known to most teachers and librarians; many are used as textbooks in undergraduate and graduate-level university courses in the study of children's and adolescent literature, the teaching of language arts and reading, and in curriculum in Grades K-12.

If a school district or individual school were limited in funds and had to be very selective in purchasing resources for its professional libraries, in all probability most of the titles would be available through interlibrary loan or direct loan from university libraries or large public libraries. As was pointed out earlier, dwindling financial support for libraries in California, as in many other states, has resulted in cutbacks in purchases to the point that collections of books and other materials and media are inadequate to meet students' instructional and informational needs. Thus, it is hardly likely that most school districts or individual school faculties would purchase even a small percentage of the books listed in these bibliographies for their professional libraries. Their best bet would be to resort to the loan services provided by university libraries.

None of the documents list any professional journals in their bibliographies. This is a serious omission, for oftentimes the most current thinking about educational issues and reports of latest research findings, as well as reviews of the most recently published professional resources and literary publications, are found in professional journals long before they appear in books.

The titles identified for the core, extended, and recreational/motivational programs represent an adequate balance of literary genres. The reading interests of children expressed typically by those within the age-range spans are represented in the grade-level spans from kindergarten through Grade 8. There seem to be enough titles identified for each of these programs so that an individual child or small groups of children and teachers in any one district, school, or classroom could easily find literary selections that would be appeal to their particular reading preferences and expressed needs. The lists in this document were developed by many educators, including administrators, curriculum planners, classroom teachers, librarians, university-level professors, and members of statewide ethnic advisory committees.

These educators used many book-selection resources as well as their own experience in classrooms. The list of readings is not intended to be prescriptive; instead it is meant to serve as a guide for local educators (and parents) to select literature for the core and independent reading programs and to establish a materials-selection policy that guides the purchase of materials for instruction and for school and classroom libraries. Like the committee that originally developed the lists which appear in the Readings, the membership of materials-selection committees should consist of administrators, curriculum planners, librarians, classroom teachers, and community

representatives. It is expected that the California State Department of Education will publish a document in which these lists are revised and updated.

Worthy of particular note is the bibliography of books of acknowledged literary merit written in languages other than English suggested for children who read better or as well in another language as they do in English. The entries in this bibliography include books in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Books that have been translated into several foreign languages, such as variants of the well known folktales, are included in the English as well as the foreign-language lists. The foreign book list helps "to ensure that the children who use another language have the same opportunity to read and enjoy the benefits of literature until they can read in English" (Readings, p. 31). The matrix for this category indicates information about the kind of program for which it has been designated (e.g., core, extended, recreation/motivational), the suggested grade-level span, and the language in which the book is written. The tribe, group, or band of Native Americans is also designated for each title in which these minorities are depicted.

There are a number of reasons they tend to hinder implementation of the California Literature Program. First and foremost, one has to refer to four separate documents before even beginning to design a literature curriculum that meets the goals and guidelines established by the California State Department of Education. It is intended that these four documents, especially the Framework, provide philosophical direction perspectives on curriculum and instruction in teaching literature within the language arts program. It is to serve as a resource for curriculum planners at the district, school, or classroom level to use in developing a strong literature program.

In light of this deliberate lack of specificity, it becomes readily apparent that extensive content and pedagogical knowledge is required for the curriculum planners to use these documents effectively. More serious than the lack of specificity about the California Literature Program--which tends to typify the degree of coverage one finds in each of the four documents--is the fragmentation that results from devoting four separate documents to the task of defining, describing, and demonstrating the crucial facets of the program. This framentation results in organizational deficiencies which further complicate and might well deter or prevent the curriculum planners from attempting to initiate the development of a vital and effective literature program in their district, school, or classroom. For most curriculum leaders and teachers this is an overwhelming expectation. Not only would all those involved in such an effort have to be thoroughly knowledgeable about approaches to literature, but a commitment in terms of time and effort would have to be made on the part of everyone involved. It would appear that the curriculum planners at the local district and the school level would need allocated time during the school year and would also need to be employed a large block of time each summer in order to develop a literature program that would comply with the guidelines, content, and instructional practices recommended in the four documents analyzed for this study.

Only two of the four documents examined for this study recommend enabling activities: the Framework and the Guide. By far the majority of the enabling activities recommended in these documents are worded in a manner that suggests that they are to be initiated by the teacher, and the activities are structured in such a manner that the discourse resulting from them would probably be between the teacher and the children (from teacher-to-child and child-to-teacher). Since some of the recommended enabling activities do call for group

work and collaborative efforts, occasional discourse between child-and-child would occur. Since specific enabling activities would actually be identified by the local curriculum planners and individual teachers, the nature of the discourse that would result from the activities actually implemented and the extent to which discourse would occur from child-to-child, child-to-teacher, or even within small groups of children, rather than primarily from teacher-to-child and child-to-teacher, would depend on the teaching style of each teacher and upon the extent to which child-centered discourse is valued and facilitated in a specific situation. This issue was not addressed directly in any of the documents examined for this study.

## Activities and Assignments

### Guidelines for Activities

Five out of the 22 guidelines listed in the Guide pertain to the literature program per se. In light of the fact that literature is viewed primarily as a means by which to achieve the learning of the concepts, skills, and attitudes inherent and related to the teaching and learning of the English-language arts (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), this would be expected. It should be pointed out, however, that incorporated in the discussion about some of the 22 guidelines and the representative enabling activities identified for each of three grade-level spans (K-3, 3-6, and 6-8) which follow each stated guideline, specific literary selections are cited. The 22 guidelines are listed below; those that apply specifically to implementing the literature curriculum (#1, #2, #3, #13, and #20) appear in italics.

1. *All students at every grade level, including students whose primary language is other than English, receive intensive, directed instruction which helps them to comprehend, respond to, and appreciate significant core works of literature and which helps them to become more fully aware of values, ethics, customs, and beliefs.*

2. *All students, individually and in small groups, read and respond in a variety of ways to literary works, selected with the help of their teacher, that extend or enhance the classroom study of core works.*

3. *All students engage in independent reading programs which are tailored to their interests, needs, and personalities and which are supported by classroom, school, and community libraries.*

4. Students draw on their past and present experiences as they listen, speak, read, and write.

5. Students participate in a variety of activities specifically designed to give them the experiences and knowledge they well need to be effective listeners, speakers, readers, and writers.

6. Students develop oral communication skills through formal and informal speaking activities.

7. Students learn in meaningful contexts the listening skills they will need to succeed academically, socially, and economically.

8. Students learn and use a variety of reading comprehension strategies and with the help of the teacher, learn to monitor and adjust their own strategies to better comprehend what they encounter in print.

9. Students learn decoding strategies, including phonics, in a variety of contexts.

10. Students become aware that writing is a means of clarifying thinking and that it is a means of clarifying thinking and that it is a process which embodies several stages, including prewriting, drafting, receiving responses, revising, editing, and postwriting activities, including evaluation.

11. Students learn the conventions of the English language, including correct usage, grammatical correctness, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, through listening, speaking, reading, and writing and through direct instruction when and if necessary.

12. Students become fluent in handwriting and the use of equipment, such as word processors and typewriters, through frequent use rather than through isolated penmanship and other drill-type exercises.

13. *Students, after having opportunities to build background, write in many different modes of discourse, such as story, observation, biographical sketch, poetry, dialogue, essay, and report.*

14. Students experience a balanced program which requires them to listen, speak, read, and write frequently in all subject areas.

15. Students respond both orally and in writing to questions which help them to acquire and use higher-order thinking skills in all subject areas.

16. Students broaden their vocabularies when listening, speaking, reading, and writing with direct assistance by the teacher in learning new words and in learning ways to unlock meaning prior to, during, and after language arts experiences.

17. Teachers and library media specialists work cooperatively to provide ongoing instruction regarding the location and appropriate use of information from varied reference materials.

18. Teachers and literary media specialists encourage and assist students to use all media and technological resources, such as word processors, computers, library books, films, audiotapes, videotapes, newspapers, magazines, dictionaries, and encyclopedias, as learning and communication tools.

19. All school staff members demonstrate effective communication skills by reading and writing along with and in view of the students and by modeling listening and speaking skills throughout the school day.

20. *Teachers encourage parents to become supportive of and involved in the educational program by reading aloud to their children, helping them with their homework, monitoring their use of television and radio, and providing a model in the use of language and in developing positive, lifelong reading habits.*

21. Educators, recognizing the limitations of standardized and objective testing, augment the use of such testing and emphasize informal and subjective measures for diagnosis and assessment.

22. Students develop skills for assessing and monitoring their own performance and progress in the language arts. (pp. 29-30)

The five guidelines which pertain more specifically to the teaching and learning of literature will be discussed below.

The wording of Guideline #1 leaves little if any room for subjective interpretation of the core selections. The representative enabling activity



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provided for kindergarten through Grade 3 serves to verify the imposed interpretation and response implied by this guideline:

> The teacher reads aloud to students the opening few pages of a familiar folk story which has two or more versions that have their origins in different cultures.... The students individually or with help from their peers or the teacher finish the story. The teacher then repeats the process, reading aloud another version or versions of the same story.... In a classwide discussion students compare and contrast the versions, noting the commonalities and differences. They discover how the versions may have been influenced by the values, customs, and beliefs of their cultural origins. As a writing exercise, they might then be encouraged to write a new ending to the story or to illustrate or describe a favorite person or character. (Guide, p. 6)

Inherent in this representative enabling activity are some questionable assumptions and expectations that the authors of the Guide have made about students' responses to folk literature. Students in the kindergarten through Grade 3 age range should be able to identify, on the literal comprehension level, the most obvious similarities and differences about some aspects of variants of a comparable motif which are called for in this particular lesson. For example, they could probably identify the likenesses and differences in the fictional elements in variants of the stories originating in two nationality groups they or the teacher read: setting (time and place), magic performed, characters' names, personality traits of the characters, and the ending of the story. Seldom, if ever, would children in this age range have sufficient prior knowledge about the background and origins of people from a different ethnic group that would enable them to "discover," let alone understand and account for, some of the profound characteristics of folk literature. Such characteristics have taken folklore scholars and anthropologists a lifetime of study and research to identify the factors that influence and shape variants, which actuate the differences one so often notices in stories of comparable motifs told by people from different ethnic groups.

This is not to deny that with the right kind of teaching, thoughtful reading, and guided study of folk literature that students in Grade 3 and beyond can understand that we tell stories about ourselves and others, about our experiences, feelings and relationships with one another and with the many facets of our world. They can come to realize that, in large measure, stories are shaped by our physical environment as well as by our individual experiences, our mental state, and our emotional concerns. They indeed are capable of understanding that the very essence of our geography and our humanness--our landscapes, customs, moral outlook, and particular values--is absorbed and assimilated throughout each of the stories we create and retell. Through the study of folk literature they can apprehend that this kind of literature reveals that our heroes, ideals, wishes, and even the images we create of our particular and personal guiding forces tend to be created in the image of the place and culture in which we grew up. They can learn to appreciate the significance of the fact that ever since the beginning of mankind, stories were always told to entertain. As entertainment, the tales passed from narrator to narrator, each storyteller adding his personal touch.

As the stories were passed on, changes were made. For example, the stories were recast whenever a storyteller thought the version he/she heard originally seemed too crude or too violent or not earthy enough or violent enough. He/she might have felt the need to touch up or alter the expressions and images and give his/her own brand of stylistic unity to incompatible or conflicting voices. As people traveled from place to place by caravans and ships, in explorations and in wars, they told their own stories and heard others. Children can be helped to recognize that today, as people travel from one community to another, across countries and seas from one coast to another, their stories are transplanted and cross-fertilized as they are shared

informally with new acquaintances, or more consciously and, perhaps, a bit more impersonally and deliberately, by professional storytellers, book publishers, and producers of commercial films and television programs. Thus, they can come to recognize and understand how ethnic and cultural traditions are blended and shaped through stories.

Little or any of this knowledge about how variants of folk literature are created will be understood unless the students are taught also that commentaries and truths of human experience have been handed down in these stories through the ages: humanity's dreams, aspirations, frailties, basic strengths, and emotions. It is important to remember that these variants of folktales are stories and thus literature, albeit folk literature. Like the author of modern stories, which have been read to them or they read on their own, the teller of these folktales engages in, selects, and interprets only those aspects of the human experience he/she chooses, and shapes them into an artistic literary form such as a fairy tale, legend, or fable. The stories he/she tells are thereby illusions of reality rather than replications or facsimiles of reality. The tale, if well crafted and effectively shared with another, has the potential to provide each listener or reader with unique experiences which evoke a feeling of aesthetic pleasure.

There is ever so much more about folk literature that children can learn and the significance and implications of which they can ponder: When retold and modified, the stories can remain compatible with the morals, beliefs, ideals, and traditions held by the people belonging to a particular ethnic or culture group. Even the particular kind of humor espoused by the people with whom the reteller is identified may be apparent in a folktale. Because folktales were transmitted orally rather than in writing, the description is usually minimal and the terminology general.

The setting in the folk stories is vague in that it is timeless and remote. In other words, the action takes place both long ago, when anything seemed possible, and in the imprecise realms of the far away. Even though most of the folktales seem to take place during a time when people did not have the benefits of technology that could give them mechanical help in the daily rounds of heavy work and when everyone had to work almost constantly to provide for even the most basic of needs, one gets the feeling what happens in the stories could happen again today, but to someone other than the one listening to the telling of this tale or reading it on his/her own. The events, however fearful, are distanced from the hearer or reader.

Traditionally, folk stories were told informally and spontaneously by members of one's immediate or local community--by the mother or father in one's home, by an elder at an extended family gathering spanning several generations, or by a storyteller sharing tales with others in a local meeting place. Consequently, the language usually reflects the speech of the locale and the idiom of an individual teller and contains catch phrases and set descriptions derived from the oral traditions. Even when the retelling is a written recording of an oral tale or a translation, the spontaneity, rhythm, and syntax of the spoken word of a people, as well as the distinctive or subtle colloquialisms used by the teller, can be retained if carefully done. Thus, we see what little consideration the authors of the California literature curriculum allowed for the kind and amount of prior knowledge that the students would need in order to engage in this enabling activity.

One should also question the appropriateness of the type and purpose of writing activity that was recommended to follow the discussion about the variants: How does this activity allow the students to capitalize on what they learned about variants, their origins, why and how they are alike and

different? If the students were asked, instead, to create their own variant by applying what they learned about the factors that cause variants (e.g. values, customs, beliefs, heroes associated with political and/or social events, geography, and other aspects of setting), they would be able to demonstrate if they learned and understood the significance of the various factors that lead to creating variants. To ask the students to write a new ending to a folktale does not help them to apply what they have learned, to demonstrate that they understood what they learned. Nor does this kind of activity validly connect one kind of activity with another; indeed, it serves more to separate each subject area from the other, thus fragmenting the curriculum.

That the purpose of reading literature is to use it as a tool for learning, rather than or even in addition to an aesthetic purpose, is clearly evident in the representative enabling activity recommended to implement any of the guidelines. But one might cite those recommended for Guideline #2. Clearly, the focus of this guideline is on the titles identified as core books rather than on an organizing idea about literature as an art, a specific theme common to a particular group of literary selection, or even to the acquisition of a significant skill or fact that could be facilitated through the use of a group of books. Only one of the three enabling activities recommended for implementing this guideline mentions specific titles:

> Drawing on a classroom library of materials selected to extend the core program, students read novels dealing with settlers and the American Indians, such as Edge of Two Worlds by Weyman Jones or The Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth Speare. The class is divided into two groups, with one half sympathetic to one group of characters and the other half sympathetic to another group. For example, one group might be sympathetic to Indian loyalties, while the other half is sympathetic to the settlers. From these points of view, the students write entries in reading logs in response to specific events in the story. In class discussion, the students use their logs to represent the different points of view and to compare and contrast these. Each group can also research, reflect on, write

about, and make an oral report about the values and beliefs of the Indians or the settlers. (Guide, pp. 7-8)

To preserve the integrity of the literature as an art, this activity, which was recommended for Grades 6-8, could be redesigned by asking the students to recollect/reread what each author did through the use of narrative, dialogue, or action. This is in order to (a) inform the reader directly or through implication about the values and beliefs held by the Native American and by the settler characters and (b) persuade the reader to be more sympathetic to the Native-American loyalties or to those of the settlers. If the students or the teacher or the students felt the need for more information to make a more valid decision about favoring the point of view of one group over the other, it would be appropriate to engage in research about the values and beliefs held by each of these groups.

One should also question the validity of asking the students to favor or reject the point of view on an issue that focuses on the values and beliefs held by one group that are in contrast to and/or different from those held by another. It is important to keep in mind that both of the titles recommended in the enabling activity cited above are about people who lived in times past and in each case the authors depicted them as people who held different values and beliefs and whose exhibited behavior was influenced by their acceptance or rejection of these values. It seems that instead of asking the students to endorse or debunk the values, beliefs, and behavior of the book characters of one group or another, we could demonstrate through literature (which by its very nature deals with aspects of the human experience), that people, regardless of their cultural ethnic identity, tend to be products of the era in which they live; that is, the values and beliefs one holds tend to be



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indicative of the era in which one lives and the behavior one manifests tends to be influenced by one's acceptance or rejection of these values and beliefs.

If the authors depicted the historical aspects of their story and human nature accurately, it would follow that the values and beliefs held by the characters in these historical fiction novels would be indicative of the time period in which these stories were set and, in all probability, are quite different from those held by the students who read them. We should let the literature speak for itself. Rather than foster negative feelings toward and stereotypes of any one group or even debating about whose values and beliefs were more or less correct, what emerges with careful and thoughtful reading of these two books could well be recognition of three themes: the overwhelming respect by the Native Americans for nature as divine, the power and value of the traditional values and beliefs of each group of people, and the theme of survival and the struggle by both groups to hold on to and live by these traditions.

A representative enabling activity was recommended to implement Guideline #3. The enabling activity was recommended for use in the middle elementary grades or Grades 3-6:

> The teacher organizes class activities to facilitate students' participation in the selection of award-winning books through such programs as the California Young Reader Medal. One way to accomplish this is to divide the class into groups and to let each group select several titles from among those which are candidates for the award. After students in each group have read the books, they reach a consensus as to those that they think are deserving of an award. After each group has reported its findings to the entire class, all students read and vote on the titles that remain in the running. To guide their decision making, the students are urged to read other books that have won prestigious awards, such as the Newbery and the Caldecott Medals. (Guide, p. 8)

This activity raises two concerns: (1) Does the selection of this kind of book award actually encourage all students to engage in independent reading

tailored to their interests, needs, and personalities, or does it limit the number and kind of books from which they can make their selections, encourage them to depend upon others (especially on those who are more persuasive or more experienced) to make decisions about the quality or lack of quality of a book, and encourage them to conform or compromise their development and expression of reading interests, tastes, and preferences?

(2) One wonders also about the validity of a book award determined by votes that do not reflect each voter's actual evaluation of that book. How can one validly say a book is worthy or unworthy of an award when one has not actually read it, but has only heard its positive and/or negative points expounded upon by another, regardless of how thoroughly and carefully that person read it? Children must be alerted to the fact that it is not uncommon for people in the same age range and of the same gender and in the same socioeconomic group to respond differently to a piece of literature. Because they have developed individual reading interests, tastes, and preferences, the nature and extent of each person's experiences with literature varies from the others, and each person differs in personality, and so forth. If one follows through with the book-award idea recommended by the authors of this literature program, it is important to remind the students that, even when one uses specific criteria as the bases for the award selection, people are likely to respond differently to the books considered for the particular award and these different responses should be respected, and that, in order to reach consensus on the identification of the award book, some people might have to compromise their actual preferences in some way.

Two enabling activities worthy of note were recommended for Guideline #13. The first enabling activity was recommend for students in kindergarten through Grade 3; the second for use with students in Grades 3-6:

> The students respond, including those with limited English proficiency, write or dictate dialogue to develop a story into a puppet show, play, or readers' theatre presentation. The emphasis is on developing short lines of dialogue that are meaningful to them. The students perform the puppet show, the play, or readers' theatre presentation for other classes and for groups of parents....
>
> The students respond to literature in writing, both through personal reflection and narrative and through creating original stories. For example, the teacher tells the story The Girl Who Loved the Wind by Jane Yolen, and the students write about and discuss how they accept change in their lives, giving examples of what makes people change. Some may create a story using examples from a real happening, such as what happens to children when they are overprotected. (Guide, p. 20)

The first enabling activity directs the students' attention to elements in the story they read (e.g. characterization, setting, theme, mood, and action) and asks them to use these in the context of the dialogue they have created for their puppet show play, or readers' theatre. The suggestion in the second enabling activity which calls for writing one's personal reflections to aspects of this story (the action or the theme of this story) is likely to help the reader clarify his or her response to the story. If the selection is well written (which The Girl Who Loved the Wind [Yolen, 1972] indeed is), the reader will most likely identify himself or herself with the plight of the character and thus empathize with her. The reader could also assume the role of the participant observer so that he or she will be able to understand the protagonist's response to her plight.

One's responses to a story are usually clarified and made more precise if one takes the time to think about his or her responses to it and if one verbalizes his or her responses orally during a discussion or in writing. This aspect of the recommended enabling activity cited above seems quite acceptable. One should question the appropriateness of the part of this enabling activity which suggests that the teachers ask the students to write about and discuss how they accept change in their lives, to give examples of

what makes people change, or to create a story using examples from a real happening (e.g., what happens to children when they are overprotected, which is one of the themes in The Girl Who Loved the Wind [Yolen, 1972]). This task focuses the reader's attention out of and away from the selection rather than on the literary aspects inherent in the selection in and of itself.

It is not at all uncommon for educators to suggest that literature be used to help students better respect and appreciate themselves and others and to cope with their problems. As was demonstrated in an earlier study (Cianciolo & Prawat, 1990) many educators believe that fiction allows the students to make the links between the cause and effect in a character's life and that this linkage leads them to understand a character's behavior and make some sense of it. This insight supposedly allows a student to process the experience vicariously. Examination of this practice reveals some significant insights about how these creators of this literature program think of art, especially literature as an art, as well as their understanding of the function of the elements of fiction and the characteristics of specific genres in that context.

The kind of response to literature this practice encourages suggests that one may properly view literature as a replication of reality: If one wants to and/or needs to understand better why one feels or thinks as one does under certain circumstances, it is proper to compare aspects of one's life to those of the book character's life. Identification by the reader with a character as he/she responds to a particular conflict or problem is an important component of the literary experience, but the reader must always be able to pull back when he/she has finished the story and say that this is only an illusion of life, this is only part of the way life is. Because literature is an art, what is depicted in it is not a mirror reflection of that reality.

Encouraging literal response to a story and encouraging students to make direct application of aspects of their real life circumstances to what the literary artist has changed into an illusion of real life through selective interpretation is a misuse of literature and transmits misinformation about the nature of literature.

An effective way to demonstrate that aspects of cultural and ethnic diversities should be celebrated is evident in the enabling activity recommended for Guideline #20. To demonstrate this guideline, the authors recommend that

> parents, relatives, or friends of students from various cultures or countries come to the classroom to talk about customs, traditions, climates, ways of life, jobs, education, government, and other topics of interest to the students. If possible, guest speakers bring with them objects which represent different aspects of the cultures represented. They also tell stories representative of their cultures. (Guide, p. 25)

Unfortunately, the recommendation that parents, relatives, or friends tell stories representative of their cultures appears to be more of an afterthought. Even though the literature of a culture or ethnic group is one of numerous other manifestations of that culture, one would expect that in the context of a literature program it would be highlighted as a way to celebrate and understand diverse cultures and ethnic groups. It is a common sight these days to see folktales read in elementary school classrooms, although they are read for any number of reasons: to entertain, to teach one or another reading skill, to promote varied patterns or standards of behavior, to study the characteristics of literary genre, or to promote the value of cultural pluralism. Often educators are advised to promote awareness and appreciation of cultural pluralism and to help students develop pride in their cultural heritage through the reading and telling of folktales (usually a fairy tale) from different countries and ethnic groups.

Retelling traditional tales or folktales in the picture-book presentations has also given new life to many of these wonderful stories. One example of how an elementary school teacher in an urban school in Lansing, Michigan, effectively presented folk literature to celebrate cultural or ethnic diversities will be described. The students enrolled in this school came from foreign countries as well as various regions of the United States. At the beginning of the school year, the teacher and some of the children's parents read aloud retellings of folktales from each country or region or state in the United States represented by the children. The teacher also took photographs of each child enrolled in this classroom. Each photograph was placed on the part of a world globe indicating the country or region in which the child was born. Attached to each photo was a brightly colored ribbon which was also attached to a picture-book retelling of a folktale that originated in the particular country or region indicated.

Within a few weeks each child and his/her ethnic or cultural background was honored through an attentive reading of a picture-book retelling of a folk-tale from that country or region. Featuring and connecting the ethnic or cultural heritage of the children and the geographical locality in which the folk stories were narrated over many generations help unify the children within any one group while setting them apart as individuals within that group. They encourage the children to take pride in their ethnic and cultural heritage.

Although a number of the guidelines do not apply specifically to the study and the use of literature, they would influence the selection and use of literature. Furthermore, the representative enabling activities recommended for implementing each of these guidelines are in and of themselves fine examples of activities one might offer to achieve specific literature-oriented

goals. Two activities recommended to serve as an enabling activity to implement Guideline #5 demonstrate how a teacher can help children acquire new experiences that will facilitate understanding and perhaps identification with the elements in the literary selections. Another activity encourages the students to recall experiences they have had and compare their observations and responses to these experiences with those depicted in specific literary selection:

> Before experiencing a work of literature, the students participate in real-life situations similar to those in the work. For example, to prepare for understanding the story line in Strega Nona by Tomie de Paola, the students will describe the size, shape, color, and taste of spaghetti and then weigh, measure, chart, or graph facts about it. They can cook the pasta and then orally or in writing describe the changes in pasta as it is cooked. (Guide, p. 10)

This activity obviously makes the hilarious incident in this Calabrian folktale concrete, but illustrations which Tomie de Paola created for his award-winning picture-book retelling of this tale are so detailed that they make very clear what happened when Big Anthony cooked the spaghetti as well as the characters' responses to the entire catastrophe. One might ask, therefore, Why belabor the obvious? Shouldn't another story which contains action far more complex and sophisticated to comprehend and/or visualize be recommended? In this way, not only the teachers but the children, too, will appreciate the important role prior knowledge plays in understanding the theme of the story, visualizing the details and aura of such story elements as the setting or action, empathizing with the feelings of the characters when they respond to a particular situation.

Preceding the list of the guidelines and the representative enabling activities identified for each guideline, a brief statement acknowledging children's emotional response to literature and the enjoyment and pleasure children get from literature is offered in the Guide:

> Reading literature involves an interaction between the reader and the text. Students respond to what they have read first in personal terms, emotionally or intellectually. They express their response to what they have read through a variety of means, and as ideas are shared among students, they refine and revise their views, returning to the printed or spoken text to verify, question, or modify responses. Ultimately, each student's response to a work of literature is a blend of universal understanding and personal views. (p. 6)

When one considers the relationship between factual and conceptual knowledge in the California Literature Program, one might consider how they address the teaching of items like characteristics or definitions of the genres or literary elements that one must recognize to be able to categorize and classify texts properly or to evaluate them. For example, a reader must know the characteristics of historical fiction and the criteria for evaluating the text in order to compare the quality of one selection with another or to determine if a particular selection is a good example (or an outstanding example or a poor example) of the genre. None of the enabling activities included in the guide pertain to the use of specific characteristics of literary genres or criteria for evaluating the quality of selections. The most specific reference to literary genre included in the example of enabling activities was in the one offered as one for Guideline #2:

> Each student maintains a reading log, which includes an individual list of readings. Each log entry has the title of the selection, the name of the author, the name of the illustrator if there is one, the subject area, and a response or evaluation. The students can then judge what types of reading they are doing by subject areas, such as sports, growing up, science fiction, poetry, animals, and mystery. The reading logs can be taken home or can be used during conferences with parents. (Guide, p. 28)

With a bit more elaboration about how the teacher and the students might react to the log entries, this same type of activity was recommended for Guideline #3:

> The teacher periodically reviews the learning logs, occasionally interviews students regarding books they have read, and gives appropriate credit to students for their independent reading.

> Periodically, students make a brief oral report to the class regarding a reading they particularly enjoyed or found provocative. (Guide, p. 8)

One wonders what specific considerations the students are expected use to determine the classification of these selections. Also, one might well ask what constitutes "appropriate credit" and on what basis is it given.

One might mention that nowhere in this program are children taught how to differentiate levels of quality from one selection to another. Nor are there attempts to teach them how to differentiate between high-quality literature and literature of average or low quality. Our analysis of the documents describing elements of the California Literature Program revealed two major weaknesses that account for this finding: (1) There is a very limited number of concepts about the criteria the literature teachers, other literature-curriculum planners, and even the students might use to select literature (for whatever purpose, be it curricular or extracurricular) and to use as guidelines for critical reading of literature in general or for the teaching and learning of critical/aesthetic response to literature.

(2) None of the activities call for the use of specific characteristics or criteria for evaluating the literary selections one has read or for gaining insights into whether one responded to one selection more or less favorably or intensely than another. Without knowledge about characteristics and criteria about these aspects of literature and without opportunities to use them when reading or using literature, book selectors--be they literature teachers, literature curriculum planners, or students--will be stifled in meeting individual (and group) reading interests and needs. Because of these weaknesses this literature program will be less likely to facilitate both the educators' and the students' potential to understand the formal elements of

literature or lead them to prefer the best our literature has to offer or to develop an understanding of literary forms, techniques, and styles so they can evaluate what they read, extending both their appreciation of literature and their imagination through thoughtful and critical responses to literature.

By far the majority of the examples of enabling activities do not take the students back into the text; that is, they do not focus on the study of literature as discipline or on encouraging and facilitating affective response or critical/aesthetic response to literature read aloud or independently by the students. Typical enabling activities are those that draw the students' attention out of and away from the text--for instance, that suggested for Guideline #1:

> As they progress through the grades, the students read about characters such as those from Aesop's Fables, Alice in Wonderland, The Hobbit, Charlotte's Web, "The Wilder Family" series, and Ishi, Last of His Tribe. As a result of direct instruction, which focuses on character analysis, students identify lessons learned from the characters by holding mock trials for the characters, reenacting the stories through storytelling, story theatre, or readers' theatre, or having one character in then story give reasons for his or her actions. They write about the characters and write new stories or episodes for them. (Guide, p. 6)

The following enabling activity was identified for Guideline #20:

> At an appropriate "stopping place" in the reading or hearing of a longer selection, or at the conclusion of a shorter work, primary students identify an event or build on a story that they especially liked. The teacher reproduces the selected pages for the students to take home and read aloud to or with family members. (Guide, p. 25)

The question, as it is posed in this enabling activity, seems a non sequitur. It really does not help the readers gain much insight about why they responded to a selection as a whole or even to aspects of it. Nor does it seem to encourage the kind of approach that would foster a understanding and development of a critical/aesthetic response to literature as a discipline or to one author's work or a particular genre or kind of literature.

Occasionally, perhaps, one might ask the students to identify some aspect of the text they especially liked or were displeased with, particularly if they are also asked to include in their response to this kind of question their rationale for favoring or rejecting one aspect of the text over another.

If such a question has any merit at all, it might be that it can serve as an obvious and simple way to demonstrate to the students that people often do respond differently to a selection as a whole or to certain parts or aspects of it. One wonders, however, about the justification or even the validity of asking such a question before one has read the entire selection. Since all of the components of a literary selection are interrelated and interdependent, it would seem that one would need to read the entire selection in order to experience the gestalt that the components would have on text as a whole and on specific aspects of the text before judging what one liked or did not like about it. Also, one might question the wisdom (or even the legality!) of copying a portion of a text and using it as practice material for reading aloud. All in all, this enabling activity is hardly worthwhile.

It should be pointed out that although some of the activities included in the Guide do foster understanding about one or another literary concept, they are intended to serve as representative enabling activities for guidelines which do not pertain to the learning and teaching of literature. For example, the following enabling activity was presented to serve as an example for implementing Guideline #19:

> The teacher, principal, parent volunteers, or other adults frequently provide incentives to read by reading aloud, during class time, a whole book or an exciting part. The teacher encourages students to extend their reading by sharing with them titles or other books by the same author or other books on a similar theme. (p. 25)

## Assessment and Evaluation

One section of the Handbook is devoted to a checklist for assessing a school's literature program (pp. 44-50). This checklist, which reflects the concepts and practices put forth in this document, is intended to function primarily as an illustration of an assessment instrument. The curriculum planner is encouraged to augment this checklist with items based on unique local needs and on other readings. This checklist, when modified to reflect local needs, is designed also to help educators to plan, develop, and implement a new program. The curriculum planners are cautioned to never use it as a teacher-evaluation instrument.

The assessment checklist which appears in the handbook consists of three parts: "A Profile of an Effective Literature Program," "The Teacher's Role in the Program," and "Aids to an Effective Literature Program." The profile identifies aspects that one should provide when implementing the core, extended, and recreation/motivational programs. The items specify quite clearly that the literature program in a school should consist of these three components. They are cautioned that each list should be broad enough to provide for discretionary judgment and creative inspiration by individual teachers by including several titles at a grade level from which the teachers may choose. Overlap of selections at more than one grade-level span should be avoided and the literary works should be worthy of study and applicable in more than one curricular area. Teachers identify the titles for study in the core programs, whereas students' choices may be provided for in the extended and recreational/motivational programs. The provision for students' choice is tempered somewhat by the statement that this practice is fine as long as the teacher-determined extended nature of the program is maintained.

The section of the assessment checklist pertaining to "The Teacher's Role" consists of 12 items. The emphasis of these aspects of the literature program is that the teacher should provide a classroom atmosphere and occasions that foster among students an ongoing lifelong interest in literature and the habit of pursuing it on their own. Teachers should create an atmosphere that encourages students to feel free to express their responses to works of literature, help the students to discover relationships between literature and their own lives, and advance their understanding of literary works.

The items included in the checklist for "Aids to an Effective Literature Program" pertain to parental support of the literature program, inservice teacher education, and the school library/media center. The items about parental support highlight various things parents can and should do at home and at school to support the literature program (e.g., read aloud to the children, do more reading themselves, take the children to the local public libraries, and monitor the quantity and quality of the children's television viewing). Inservice teacher education items highlight the teachers' involvement in planning and implementing inservice education programs and encourage teachers to engage in staff-development programs designed to upgrade instruction and curriculum in general and the school's literature program in particular. The items in the checklist for assessing the library/media center focus on the professionalism of its staff and the nature, quality, and scope of the library/media center program. Accessibility to the school library/media center program is declared paramount and institutional and administrative barriers are minimized.

Many of the items in the checklist appear almost self-evident. Yet, Cianciolo's research in the teaching and learning of literature in the

elementary and middle schools, plus her work with teachers and librarians in carefully designed inservice programs, and her observations in any number of classrooms and school libraries in Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Texas help one to realize how very valid and germane each item is in this checklist for assessing a school's literature program.

## Summary and Conclusions

If and when capable curriculum planners are willing to take the time to put forth the effort needed to sift through and combine the information about California Literature Program goals, content, literary selections, assessment procedures, and so on, which are contained in each of the four State Department of Education documents, they will have the makings for a fine literature program--one that could well be tailor made to the educational needs, interests, and particular inclinations of their own school district, school cite, and even individual classrooms. One of the primary strengths of this program is that it is based on using separate editions of children's literature trade books instead of the more traditional anthologized textbooks which contain portions of or complete literary selections. In fact, the Readings provides a list of 1,010 titles of children's literature trade books from which school districts and/or teachers can choose when developing a literature curriculum.

Additionally, even though the goals do not state that literature-program developers should consider the students' learning needs, reading interests, or aspects of the study of literature that are developmentally appropriate for children at various grade levels, the authors appear to consider the importance of these goals in various ways in each of the documents analyzed for this study. For example, the literary selections listed in the Readings have wide appeal, seem to be appropriately grouped according to genre, and match the reading interests of children in the designated grade-level spans. In

addition, there seems to be a balance between the classics, award books, critics' choices, and children's favorites.

The program goals in the California Literature Program do not address the strategic and metacognitive aspects of processing knowledge about literature as a discipline. The stated central purpose of the California Literature Program is to promote a literature-based English-language arts curriculum rather than to promote literature as an art form or as a discipline. The primary objective, the goals and related guidelines, as well as the representative enabling activities and evaluation procedures, as outlined in the four documents, do not focus on learning about or appreciating literature. Instead, they focus on using literature as a model for writing or oral-composition skills or as a tool that provides content (facts) to be learned. Even though this program fails to state specific objectives and goals that address the teaching of literary understandings, there is a minor focus on the sequential development of some literary appreciation skills. For example, the authors recommend that in Grade 2 children should learn to recognize poetry as one of several forms of literature, while in Grade 5 children should be able to identify the elements of poetry.

The Handbook delineates the goals of the California Literature Program. For example, the focus of Goal #1 is "to increase the students' appreciation of aesthetic values of literature by whetting and sharpening their intellectual skills." In this goal the authors present literature as "an ideal matrix for teaching children how to think" (p. 8). In addition, they believe the "emotional value" of literature motivates reading, which "leads to improved reading skills" (p. 7), an expanded vocabulary, and improved writing, listening, and speaking skills. Although this is a valuable goal for all literature programs, the authors of the California Literature Program appear

to make the assumption that reading a significant amount of quality literature is the only prerequisite for accomplishing this goal, which is not the case. It is also apparent that the authors do not recognize literature as an art form nor that there are sensitivities and understandings which must be developed in order to respond critically aesthetically to literature.

Goals #2 and #3 address the use of literature in developing good citizens with a sense of ethical responsibility. While Goals #4 and #5 outline the need for children to be exposed to literature that represents both their common cultural heritage and their individual cultural heritage. All of these goals appear to have been addressed in various representative enabling activities and could be addressed through the proper selection of appropriate trade books from the list provided in the Readings.

The Guide provides a suggested learning sequence, delineates concepts and skills, and details representative enabling activities as models for an effective literature-based English-language arts curriculum. This document is organized into five broad categories: "Emphasizing Significant Literary Works," "Basing Instruction on Students' Experiences," "Developing an Interrelated Program," "Developing an Integrated Program Across the Curriculum," "Evaluating the English-Language Arts Program." Each of these broad categories is then subdivided into specific Guidelines (a total of 22) with representative enabling activities for three grade-level spans (K-3, 3-6, 6-8) for each guideline.

The representative enabling activities that are recommended to implement the guidelines generally reflect the authors' position that literature is a tool for learning rather than or even in addition to an aesthetic experience. The primary focus of many of the guidelines and activities is on books identified in the Readings instead of an organizing idea about literature as



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art or a specific theme common to a group of literary selections. None of the guidelines or enabling activities address the use of specific characteristics of literary genre or criteria for evaluating the quality of literary selections. For example, readers must know the characteristics of modern fantasy and the criteria for evaluating the text before they can compare the quality of one selection with another or determine if the literary selection is of high quality. Furthermore, none of the four documents attempt to teach children how to differentiate levels of quality. In fact, there is only minimal mention of the criteria for evaluating the quality of a literary selection which teachers, curriculum planners, and/or students could use as guidelines for selecting quality literature.

As stated above, the authors appear to have considered, in a minimal way, the importance of sequential learning; however, the sequence does not seem to focus on or lead to any organizing idea about literature as an art form or as a discipline. Nor is the content of the literature curriculum organized around the basic understandings and principles rooted in literature as a discipline. Instead, the literature curriculum is primarily based on a sequence that uses the materials (i.e., the core literary selections) rather than on the sequential learning of concepts, skills, and attitudes that would enable students to develop an awareness and appreciation of aspects of literature that would lead them to understand literature as an art and to view more critically its aesthetic elements.

The organizational deficiencies found in the California Literature Program (i.e., the lack of a specific scope and sequence) would require that curriculum developers have extensive content and pedagogical knowledge. Thus, most of the members of a literature-curriculum committee would need to refer to professional sources other than the four documents that delineate the

California Literature Program in order to become knowledgeable about various aspects of developing an effective literature program. Two of the four documents detailing the California Literature Program, namely the Framework and the Handbook, provide extensive bibliographies of professional publications, which should provide a fairly adequate reading list for literature curriculum planners. Both bibliographies, however, fail to include any professional journals, which would provide current information about educational issues and research pertinent to the development and implementation of a literature program.

The California Literature Program is based on the extensive use of individual literary selections and trade books. Thus, school libraries and librarians will play a crucial role in the effective implementation of this program. The library collection must be extensive and must be updated frequently in order for teachers and students to have access to the numerous literary selections listed in the Readings. This component of this program could prove to be problematic because many schools throughout the United States have downsized their library holdings and have replaced the professional librarian with aides and/or parent volunteers. Before school districts, individual schools, or individual teachers will be able to develop and implement a literature curriculum built on the California Literature Program, both the libraries and staffing with professional librarians will have to become a priority.

In conclusion, this analysis of the California Literature Program has mentioned both the strengths and weaknesses identified. Its primary strength is the use of individual literary selections in the form of trade books. In fact, it is, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, the only literature-based language-arts curriculum built on a firm foundation of children's trade

books. In addition, the authors of this program acknowledge the needs of students whose first language is one other than English when they included literary selections written in foreign languages in the Readings (1987). They have made an obvious attempt to address the needs of all children.

In contrast, there are prominent deficiencies and concerns about this program. First, anyone interested in developing a literature program based on the California Literature Program would have to read, understand, and sort through four separate documents, each of which explains different components of the program. As a result, some literature-curriculum developers may find it difficult to assimilate the information in all of the four documents.

Second, it appears that the authors of this program have assumed that curriculum developers--be they administrators, teachers, or parents--possess extensive content and pedagogical knowledge. In all likelihood this is an invalid assumption. Therefore, most members of a literature-curriculum planning committee will need to read numerous professional works before they will even be able to understand the implications of developing and implementing a curriculum based on the California Literature Program.

Third, the goals, guidelines, and representative enabling activities, as a general rule, lack specificity. A good example of this is the lack of a concrete scope and sequence both within grade-level spans and across grade levels, kindergarten through Grade 8. In addition, the representative enabling activities should have included more direction for development and implementation of activities which support an effective literature program, particularly those that deal with and offer models for questioning.

> There is a direct correlation between the syntax or level of thinking inherent in teacher's questions and the syntax or level of thinking evidenced in the students' responses. Furthermore, teachers whose questions more frequently require divergent thinking produce more divergent thinking on the part of their students.

> Seldom, if ever, is one able to offer critical thinking questions without careful thought and planning. (Cianciolo, in progress)

Teachers must learn or be taught how to formulate questions which will elicit thoughtful answers. The representative enabling activities fail to address the need for any instructions in the development of questioning that focuses on critical/aesthetic responses to literature.

The final and possibly most important concern is that the California Literature Program does not focus on literature as an art form or as a discipline. Instead, the focus of this program seems to be on using literature as a tool to learn something else. In fact, it appears that the authors of this program assume that knowledge about literature as an art form or discipline and a subsequent development in aesthetic response to literature will be realized merely by reading a significant amount of quality literature. They fail to acknowledge the essential conditions that must be considered in order for an aesthetic response to literature to occur: (a) The literary selection must be thought of as an aesthetic object in and of itself and (b) aesthetic values do exist--a society establishes characteristics or standards by which the quality of the literary selection should be evaluated.

Additionally, in the statement of goals and the nature of the activities recommended, the authors present realistic fiction selections as mirroring reality. They fail to recognize that literary art is a selective interpretation of reality, an illusion, not a mirror, of reality. Finally, even though the authors of this program state that it is important to develop children's critical thinking and appreciation of literature, the analysis shows that this is seldom the primary objective.

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Appendix:

Framing Questions

## Phase II Study 2: Curriculum Materials Analysis
## Framing Questions

### A. GOALS

1. Are selective, clear, specific goals stated in terms of student outcomes? Are any important goals omitted? As a set, are the goals appropriate to students' learning needs?

2. Do goals include fostering conceptual understanding and higher order applications of content?

3. To what extent does attainment of knowledge goals imply learning networks of knowledge structured around key ideas in addition to the learning of facts, concepts, and principles or generalizations?

4. What are the relationships between and among conceptual (propositional), procedural, and conditional knowledge goals?

5. To what extent do the knowledge goals address the strategic and metacognitive aspects of processing the knowledge for meaning, organizing it for remembering, and accessing it for application?

6. What attitude and dispositional goals are included?

7. Are cooperative learning goals part of the curriculum?

8. Do the stated goals clearly drive the curriculum (content, activities, assignments, evaluation)? Or does it appear that the goals are just lists of attractive features being claimed for the curriculum or post facto rationalizations for decisions made on some other basis?

### B. CONTENT SELECTION

1. Given the goals of the curriculum, is the selection of the content coherent and appropriate? Is there coherence across units and grade levels? (Note: all questions in this section should be answered with the goals in mind.)

2. What is communicated about the nature of the discipline from which the school subject originated?

   a. How does content selection represent the substance and nature of the discipline?

   b. Is content selection faithful to the discipline from which the content is drawn?

c. What does the relationship among conceptual (propositional), conditional, and procedural knowledge communicate about the nature of the discipline?

3. To what extent were life applications used as a criterion for content selection and treatment? For example, in social studies, is learning how the world works and how it got to be that way emphasized?

4. What prior student knowledge is assumed? Are assumptions justified? Where appropriate, does the content selection address likely student misconceptions?

5. Does content selection reflect consideration for student interests, attitudes, dispositions to learn?

6. Are there any provisions for student diversity (culture, gender, race, ethnicity)?

## C. CONTENT ORGANIZATION AND SEQUENCING

1. Given the goals of the curriculum, is the organization of the content coherent and appropriate? Is there coherence across units and grade levels? (Note: All questions in this section should be answered with goals kept in mind.)

2. To what extent is the content organized in networks of information structured in ways to explicate key ideas, major themes, principles, generalizations?

3. What is communicated about the nature of the discipline from which the school subject originates?

   a. How does content organization represent the substance and nature of the discipline?

   b. Is content organization faithful to the discipline from which the content is drawn?

   c. What does the relationship among conceptual (propositional), conditional, and procedural knowledge communicate about the nature of the discipline?

4. How is content sequenced, and what is the rationale for sequencing? For example, is a linear or hierarchical sequence imposed on the content so that students move from isolated and lower level aspects toward more integrated and higher level aspects? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the chosen sequencing compared to other choices that might have been made?

5. If the content is spiralled, are strands treated in sufficient depth, and in a non-repetitious manner?

## D. CONTENT EXPLICATION IN THE TEXT

1. Is topic treatment appropriate?

   a. Is content presentation clear?

   b. If content is simplified for young students, does it retain validity?

   c. How successfully is the content explicated in relation to students' prior knowledge, experience, and interest? Are assumptions accurate?

   d. When appropriate, is there an emphasis on surfacing, challenging, and correcting student misconceptions?

2. Is the content treated with sufficient depth to promote conceptual understanding of key ideas?

3. Is the text structured around key ideas?

   a. Is there alignment between themes/key ideas used to introduce the material, the content and organization of the main body of material, and the points focused on in summaries and review questions at the end?

   b. Are text-structuring devices and formatting used to call attention to key ideas?

   c. Where relevant, are links between sections and units made explicit to students?

4. Are effective representations (e.g., examples, analogies, diagrams, pictures, overheads, photos, maps) used to help students relate content to current knowledge and experience?

   a. When appropriate, are concepts represented in multiple ways?

   b. Are representations likely to hold student interest or stimulate interest in the content?

   c. Are representations likely to foster higher level thinking about the content?

   d. Do representations provide for individual differences?

5. When pictures, diagrams, photos, etc. are used, are they likely to promote understanding of key ideas, or have they been inserted for other

reasons? Are they clear and helpful, or likely to be misleading or difficult to interpret?

6. Are adjunct questions inserted before, during, or after the text? Are they designed to promote: memorizing; recognition of key ideas; higher order thinking; diverse responses to materials; raising more questions; application?

7. When skills are included (e.g., map skills), are they used to extend understanding of the content or just added on? To what extent is skills instruction embedded within holistic application opportunities rather than isolated as practice of individual skills?

8. To what extent are skills taught as strategies, with emphasis not only on the skill itself but on developing relevant conditional knowledge (when and why the skill would be used) and on the metacognitive aspects of its strategic application?

## E. TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS AND CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

1. What forms of teacher-student and student-student discourse are called for in the recommended activities, and by whom are they to be initiated? To what extent does the recommended discourse focus on a small number of topics, wide participation by many students, questions calling for higher order processing of the content?

2. What are the purposes of the recommended forms of discourse?

   a. To what extent is clarification and justification of ideas, critical and creative thinking, reflective thinking, or problem-solving promoted through discourse?

   b. To what extent do students get opportunities to explore/explain new concepts and defend their thinking during classroom discourse? What is the nature of those opportunities?

3. Who or what stands out as the authority for knowing? Is the text to be taken as the authoritative and complete curriculum or as a starting place or outline for which the discourse is intended to elaborate and extend it? Are student explanations/ideas and everyday examples elicited?

4. Do recommended activities include opportunities for students to interact with each other (not just the teacher) in discussions, debates, cooperative learning activities, etc.?

## F. ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. As a set, do the activities and assignments provide students with a variety of activities and opportunities for exploring and communicating their understanding of the content?

   a. Is there an appropriate mixture of forms and cognitive, affective, and/or aesthetic levels of activities?

   b. To what extent do they call for students to integrate ideas or engage in critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, inquiry, decision making, or higher order applications vs. recall of facts & definitions or busy work?

2. As a set, do the activities and assignments amount to a sensible program of appropriately scaffolded progress toward stated goals?

3. What are examples of particularly good activities and assignments, and what makes them good (relevant to accomplishment of major goals, student interest, foster higher level thinking, feasibility and cost effectiveness, likeliness to promote integration and life application of key ideas, etc.)?

   a. Are certain activities or assignments missing that would have added substantially to the value of the unit?

   b. Are certain activities or assignments sound in conception but flawed in design (e.g., vagueness or confusing instruction, invalid assumptions about students' prior knowledge, infeasibility, etc.)?

   c. Are certain activities or assignments fundamentally unsound in conception (e.g., lack relevance, pointless busy work)?

4. To what extent are assignments and activities linked to understanding and application of the content being taught?

   a. Are these linkages to be made explicit to the students to encourage them to engage in the activities strategically (i.e., with metacognitive awareness of goals and strategies)? Are they framed with teacher or student questions that will promote development?

   b. Where appropriate, do they elicit, challenge, and correct misconceptions?

   c. Do students have adequate knowledge and skill to complete the activities and assignments?

5. When activities or assignments involve integration with other subject areas, what advantages and disadvantages does such integration entail?

6. To what extent do activities and assignments call for students to write beyond the level of a single phrase or sentence? To what extent do the chosen forms engage students in higher order thinking?

## G. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

1. Do the recommended evaluation procedures constitute an ongoing attempt to determine what students are coming to know and to provide for diagnosis and remediation?

2. What do evaluation items suggest constitute mastery? To what extent do evaluation items call for application vs. recall?

   a. To what extent are multiple approaches used to assess genuine understanding?

   b. Are there attempts to assess accomplishment of attitudinal or dispositional goals?

   c. Are there attempts to assess metacognitive goals?

   d. Where relevant, is conceptual change assessed?

   e. Are students encouraged to engage in assessment of their own understanding/skill?

3. What are some particularly good assessment items, and what makes them good?

4. What are some flaws that limit the usefulness of certain assessment items (e.g., more than one answer is correct; extended production form, but still asking for factual recall, etc.).

## H. DIRECTIONS TO THE TEACHER

1. Do suggestions to the teacher flow from a coherent and manageable model of teaching and learning the subject matter? If so, to what extent does the model foster higher order thinking?

2. To what extent does the curriculum come with adequate rationale, scope and sequence chart, introductory section that provide clear and sufficiently detailed information about what the program is designed to accomplish and how it has been designed to do so?

3. Does the combination of student text, advice and resources in teachers manual, and additional materials constitute a total package sufficient

to enable teachers to implement a reasonably good program? If not, what else is needed?

a. Do the materials provide the teacher with specific information about students' prior knowledge (or ways to determine prior knowledge) and likely responses to instruction, questions, activities, and assignments? Does the teachers manual provide guidance about ways to elaborate or follow up on text material to develop understanding?

b. To what extent does the teachers manual give guidance concerning kinds of sustained teacher-student discourse surrounding assignments and activities?

c. What guidance is given to teachers regarding how to structure activities and scaffold student progress during assignment completion, and how to provide feedback following completion?

d. What kind of guidance is given to the teacher about grading or giving credit to participating in classroom discourse, work on assignments, performance on tests, or other evaluation techniques?

e. Are suggested materials accessible to the teacher?

4. What content and pedagogical knowledge is required for the teacher to use this curriculum effectively?

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